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ABSTRACT

Reassessment of the role of the superintendent largely has been excluded from the educational reform movement of the 1980s. This paper contends that superintendents must utilize a new "leaderly" model of active instructional leadership in superintending to improve the education of students. The paper is a tool for those working to include revision of the superintendent's role in educational reform. The first section reviews the evolution of the superintendent's role and the emerging instructional-leadership function. Leadership and vision also are defined. Section 2 presents the superintendent's role from the perspective of school boards, researchers, the public, and superintendents themselves. Section 3 examines how superintendents shape the way staffs and schools function to reflect their visions for instruction and learning. The paper concludes in section 4 with consideration of the concerns and improvement processes superintendents encounter in providing leadership for school reform and improvement. Superintendents can give direction and purpose to the educational process and lead principals and teachers. (Contains 127 references.) (JPT)

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IMAGES of Superintendents' Leadership for Learning

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the superintendent's *active instructional leadership* is a necessary precondition to students' instructional success. Thus, the discussion gives attention to definitions of leadership and to variations of superintendents' roles reported in the literature, as perceived by superintendents, school boards, and others.

Descriptions of how effective superintendents express, demonstrate, and exercise leadership in their districts are reported from the as-yet thin body of research in this area. Finally, the report explores the dilemmas associated with the superintendent's role that make leadership and school improvement difficult.

The paper calls for a new model of *leaderly* superintending. This term will not be found in Webster's, although it is used frequently in this paper. It was coined by Professor Lawrence D. Haskew, Dean of the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin, and "Dean Emeritus of Superintendents for the State of Texas." Recognition and thanks to him are given.

Sometimes a public leader must be the maestro leading the orchestra, sometimes the soloist carrying the group, sometimes the percussionist offering the radical beat, and sometimes the fourth chair violin blending in and letting others take the lead and the credit.

Another metaphor that might apply is a rod of bamboo. A public leader needs to know when to bend like bamboo or when to stand erect like a tree. The challenge that comes with public leadership is to be deep-rooted in a sense of purpose and vision, but flexible like bamboo so you can bend and then return to lead.

Zaharis, J. K. (1988, March). Know when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em. *The School Administrator*, 45(3), 10-12.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments v
Preface vii

Introduction 1

Evolution of the Role of Superintendent
New Demands
Leadership as a Concept
Definitions of Leadership
In Summary

Views of Superintendents' Roles 13

The Incumbents' Views
School Boards' Views
Views of Others
In Summary

Leadership Skills and the Superintendent 29

Advice About Superintendents' Leadership
What They Do
Relationship to Principals
Leadership Sharing
In Summary

The Superintendents' Change Strategies 69

Vision-Making and Culture Creation
Dilemmas
Another School Leader
In Summary

References 79
Appendix A 93

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Shirley Hord
March 1989

PREFACE

Why this paper? There is an increasing concern about the appalling circumstances of schooling for many children. The certainty that we are losing large percentages of students every year, or that we are ill-preparing them for successful adult responsibilities, arrests our attention. While much has been reported about "restructuring" schools in order to address these problems, a surprisingly modest amount of attention has been given to the role and influence of the chief executive of the local educational enterprise, the superintendent. On the other hand, the school-based leadership role of the principal has been widely analyzed and reported, and a rapidly growing knowledge base includes findings about principals' leadership behaviors and actions. These findings are highly consistent across studies, particularly within the context of school change and improvement.

Though there has not been a similar abundance of empirical research on superintendents' work and roles, a fact much lamented by researchers, a substantial body of knowledge has accumulated out of practice. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has supported a search for useful information about the superintendency, and has published a significant array of books, monographs, and other documents about the school district's executive educator. In short, the AASA has taken the lead in compiling and sharing its collective wisdom, garnered in the main from the craft and practice of superintendents. Such information is relevant to the needs of children and schools that require bold directions for change. One of the learnings from the research on principals as school leaders has illuminated the dilemma of "principaling for improvement" without the support and nurturing of the district level administrator. If the superintendent is admiral of the fleet (Rhodes, 1987), then the admiral must step out on the bridge and take the lead. Can this happen? Is it happening now?

This paper explores the superintendent's role, especially as it relates to stepping out and taking the lead for improving the instructional program and its delivery to students. The paper argues for a more active leadership role for superintendents in providing quality schooling where all children can — and do learn. This paper is *not* a critique of the literature that addresses this topic. The paper's purpose is to serve as a resource of collected information, where the reader may access material directly with little interference of this author's filters.

As noted, the superintendent was largely ignored in the reform activities of the 80s. However, there are those seeking to correct the deficiency, and a modest body of research is accumulating that provides initial insights into such a leadership role for the schools' chief executive. This paper is a review of that available literature. It is descriptive, seeking to report what is now known and only partially understood. The tentative tone here reflects the thinness of the knowledge base and the lack of powerful frameworks for the study and understanding of the superintendent's role. Some researchers are drawing parallels between the effective district leader, the superintendent, and the effective school leader, the principal. Certainly, further studies of the executive leadership of schools beg to be done, for in superintendents' offices ultimately reside the responsibility for the schooling success of our children.

The reader of this paper will find in the first section a brief review depicting the evolution of the superintendent's role and the currently emerging instructional leadership function. A discussion of definitions of leadership and vision is included. Finally, defining *leadership*, for purposes of this paper, sets the reviewer's parameters and perspective.

Section Two takes the reader across the superintendent's roles from the perspectives of school boards, researchers, various publics, and superintendents themselves. This section provides the contextual backdrop for the third section.

In Section Three a particular aspect of the superintendent's role is examined: How does the chief executive shape the way staff and schools function in order to reflect his or her dreams and visions for instruction and learning in the reality of classrooms? This literature is not thick, as already mentioned, but is richly illuminating.

In Section Four, the paper concludes with a consideration of the change/improvement process and the concerns, dilemmas, and other factors sure to be encountered by the superintendent in efforts to provide leadership for reform and the improvement of schools.

The exciting message that emanates from this meandering through the various literatures is that superintendents can give direction and impetus to the instructional enterprise, leading principals and teachers in comprehensive efforts to make a difference in the lives of the children in their trust.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the role and functioning of school superintendents has been a long-standing endeavor. Culbertson (1988) reports that as early as 1875, Payne assessed the lack of comprehension regarding the school superintendency as due to not gaining "sense impressions" of it. To be sure, a growing body of literature is contributing more "sense impressions" which have changed as the role itself has evolved.

Evolution of the Role

The development of the superintendent's position has occurred in three phases, according to Griffiths (1966). In the first phase, 1838-1910, superintendents were viewed as being focused primarily on *instruction*, chosen from the ranks of teachers and continuing to teach classes. After the turn of the century, when America was guided by a strong business community, schools were seen as needing direction from a business manager type rather than by a scholar educator (Ortiz and Marshall, 1988). These *businessman* superintendents were seen as expert managers maintaining efficiency. As the one-room school was replaced by buildings of increasing size and there was an increase in the number of schools, teachers, and students, the day-to-day administration of the school system was given to a hired *professional school administrator* – the school district superintendent (Scott and Smith, 1987). This third phase of the role (1945 - present) has not been so clearly defined; but the role occupants are seen no longer as improvers of their practice, but as the users of models developed by experts.

Over time, various institutions — universities, national and state associations — and educational journals were organized to explore and report understandings about the problems encountered in this new role, a role that dealt with increasing complexity. Burlingame (1988) reports that training programs began producing superintendents who were "brokers in power and experts in survival" (page 445). He explains that superintendent candidates moving from being teachers to becoming administrators "intent on power" were socialized from a focus on education to a new perspective on the politics of the job. Much of the literature of the superintendency concerns the domain of the politics of education, according to Boyan (1988), who further reports from a review of the

literature that "environmental conditions have pressed the superintendent more and more toward adoption of a political role" (page 89).

New Demands

A recent survey of 1704 superintendents by the National Center for Education Information reveals that America's school administrators are primarily male, white, well paid, and "resistant to outside influence" (Feistritzer, 1988, page 1). They regard their schools as doing a better job than the general public thinks they are doing. For example, 87 percent of the superintendents said their communities' schools have improved in the last five years; this compares with 25 percent of the general public and 33 percent of public school parents who agree that schools have improved. Eighty-one percent of the superintendents think educational standards in U. S. schools have improved in recent years, while 49 percent of the public thinks they have become worse (Feistritzer, 1988, page 2).

This lack of common perception may not bode well for superintendents in the face of growing demands for reform from the public and professional press. The National Governor's Association, the Carnegie Forum, Education Commission of the States, and others have called for significant changes in the ways schools are structured and deliver their services to children. Sizer (*Restructured Schools*, 1988) suggests that "the workplace is set up wrong and the learning place is set up wrong" in schools (page 6). The Carnegie report supports increased school-based decision making and accountability. Michael Cohen (1987) maintains that U. S. schools and colleges must effectively educate *all* students, and he points out that public education is a big public business that will need to address rapid changes in work technologies and job opportunities and demands. Other ideas abound — all of which promise to influence the role of superintendent. A primary reason for the restructuring of schools is the need to improve productivity of the education system in general; clearly, school districts have a pivotal role to play in fostering and supporting needed changes.

The school district creates the context in which schools operate, and district policies have the cumulative effect of determining instructionally important decisions at the district level. The local district role should be an effort to "create an orientation towards performance, rather than procedure" (Cohen, 1987, page 15). Cohen suggests that the challenge for school districts

will be to create structures that support school-level decision making effectively and efficiently, while orchestrating harmonious district-wide relationships among schools with their own governance structures and their own distinctive cultures and orientations.

Such demands for restructuring schools suggest the need for developing new conceptions of control and leadership at the district level, as well as new conceptions of control and leadership at the local school level. The governors of the nation offer "to forge a powerful compact with educators that will change the way American schools work in order to get results" (Green, 1987, page 9).

But, how to go about developing superintendents who can manage structures for the mandated near term and for the future beyond (i.e., for the 21st century), to manage structures that do not yet exist? More importantly, where will the visionary leadership be found to stimulate and support the school reformations that are anticipated? Good leaders must be good managers, but good managers may not be good leaders. A clearly articulated "lack of public confidence and interest in schools appears to have affected the behavior of superintendents" (Griffiths, 1988, page 38), and they themselves have identified factors influencing their role performance:

1. There is far more criticism of administrators now than ever before.

2. Few people — if any — are happy with, or even tolerant of, administrators.

3. Problems and issues are becoming increasingly complex. More people are involved, there are more facets to be considered, and everything seems to be interconnected.

4. The composition of school boards appears to be changing. There are more people, mostly women, who have little or no experience in organizations outside the home, and fewer executives and high-level professionals on boards. The quality of board membership is seen as declining.

5. There is less money available to administrators, yet they are expected to do more with less.

6. During this period of intense criticism of U. S. public schools, internal affairs have become easier to manage. It seems that faculty and administration coalesce against the outside world.

7. There is little interest on the part of teachers in becoming administrators. If administration has not totally lost its appeal, it is on the way to doing so.

8. There is more involvement with groups and organizations outside the school system. Superintendents work 50 to 60 hours per week and, in addition, spend time preparing speeches, and attending frequent meetings and other functions. (Griffiths, 1988, page 37)

To make matters worse, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration's report (Griffiths, Stout, and Forsyth, 1988) has been criticized and the preparation of administrators characterized as "an American tragedy" (Gibboney, 1987, page 28). Gibboney challenges the Commission's perspective on educational leaders as that of efficient managers, asserting that leadership cast as management has failed for decades.

Can examples of leadership be found in the superintendency, examples that might serve as a foundation on which to build a new conception of superintendent leadership, leadership that directly addresses instruction? If so, what might such factors look like? In this paper, these questions are explored through a review of the literature that was conducted to examine reports of superintendent leadership and to elicit images of this phenomenon. Before these findings are presented, however, some concepts of leadership are briefly discussed.

Leadership as a Concept

The study of leadership has produced an array of perspectives and theories; Rutherford, Hord, Huling, and Hall (1983) assert that "theories, models and perspectives of leadership abound" (page 5). Presented here, in quick review, are selected theories or "positions" that seem to represent the leadership literature:

Trait theory - In this case, leaders are born with the characteristics or qualities that will permit leadership. These qualities may be enhanced in an individual, but not created (Bass, 1981; Bernard, 1926; Tead, 1929).

Situational theory - Would-be leaders learn to use various skills appropriate to particular situations. Leadership is situational and dynamic, requiring different leader styles as workers (or subordinates) progress in their development and maturation (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977).

Organizational theory - Leadership results from role and position in an organization. The individual learns the skills necessary for each hierarchical level in the organization, especially those at the level immediately above so as to be ready for promotion (Bennis and Nanus, 1985).

Power theory - Power is the essence of leadership. Despite position, some individuals are able to "make things happen" by exercising more influence on followers than others. Such a person would demonstrate persuasion, political maneuvering, manipulation, accurate assessment of others, and effective strategizing (Kellerman, 1984).

Contingency theory - The appropriate match between leader personality attributes/motivational structure and the degree to which the leader has situational influence and control will dictate effectiveness. Leadership is, thus, contingent upon these interacting factors (Fiedler, 1978).

Ethical reflection theory - The ethical use of power responds to a view of the needs and aspirations of humans. Leaders make choices for action based on ethical intent (Burns, 1978).

Social ethical practice theory - Leadership is "grounded in traits" and is sensitive to changing situations that develop complexities "beyond situational theory's reach"; it is "shaped by roles and position" that are more than organizational structure; it is "activated by power, yet challenges the primacy of power"; it is driven by vision, but not just any direction is satisfactory; and it is ethical, "tempered by an awareness of existence, ambiguities and unforeseen consequences" (Terry, 1988,

page 15). Leadership is "evoked by issues in the world that require action and demand involvement" (Terry, 1988, page 16).

Vision theories - Much has been made of CEOs' and other leaders' visions and the place of vision-making in the exercise of leadership. Additional discussion will be given to vision because it has been given such abundant attention in discussions of leadership.

In discussing vision as a theory, Terry (1988) suggests that "leadership articulates directions for human action. Leadership scans current trends and points people toward a meaningful future" (page 3). In extensive writing on visionary leadership, Sashkin (1987) indicates that "one does not become CEO of even a small American corporation by being a passive, conforming individual" (page 21). In fact, effective as compared with less effective leaders

> have a high need for power;
>
> exercise that power for organizational and employee benefit, not just for personal satisfaction;
>
> have a moderately high need for achievement;
>
> involve subordinates in a highly participative manner;
>
> strongly emphasize both task and interpersonal concerns through their everyday behaviors. (Sashkin, 1987, page 21)

Further, successful leaders are described as having an appropriate *combination* of individual personality factors and behavioral skills, realizing that there are situational factors that constrain and/or facilitate effective leadership.

What about the super-leaders, the charismatic individuals who create unusually high-performing organizations? Bennis (1984) identified characteristics of charismatic visionary leaders. Sashkin (1987) translated these into five key behavioral factors:

> focusing attention on specific issues of concern;

> taking risks, but only on the basis of careful calculation of the chances of success;
>
> communicating skillfully, with understanding and empathy;
>
> demonstrating consistency and trustworthiness by one's behavior;
>
> expressing active concern for people (including one's self). (Sashkin, 1987, page 23)

Visionary leaders define and communicate values through these behaviors. In so doing they shape an organizational culture that benefits its members. Further, these leaders have a special ability to "vision" due to greater levels of cognitive development; three factors operant in visionary leaders are personality, behaviors, and situation, and are described by Sashkin (1987):

> understanding leaders' cognitive capacity, in terms of their ability to shape actions, reflect on paths to goals, extend and generalize such cognitive models, and identify and compare alternative approaches;
>
> understanding leaders' behaviors, in terms of the specialized task-oriented and relationships-oriented behaviors that characterize visionary leadership — focusing attention, taking risks, communicating, demonstrating trust, and expressing concerns;
>
> understanding leaders' situations, in terms of the organizational values and cultures they are attempting to shape. (Sashkin, 1987, page 26)

Visionary leaders develop a culture wherein other internal entrepreneurs are encouraged to develop new ideas and programs. Such leaders create norms of risk-taking, of freedom from fear of punishment if a risk fails. It is made clear that taking action and then asking forgiveness is more desirable than working through the procedures to get permission in advance. These leaders foster a belief in the importance of people, so that integration and coordination occur. Coordination is more likely when people are committed and involved.

The belief in the importance of people really means "involving them directly and to the greatest possible extent, in the operation of the organization" (Sashkin and Fulmer, 1987, page 57).

Definitions of Leadership

In 1978, McCall and Lombardo summed the previous years of leadership research to report, "only four things learned and one seems not too certain:"

1. Personality traits are not reliable predictors of leader effectiveness.

2. Generally leader consideration toward followers is correlated with follower satisfaction (but it is not clear in which direction the causal arrow points).

3. No leader style or approach is effective in all situations.

4. By structuring the expectations of followers, leaders play a crucial role. (McCall and Lombardo, 1978, cited in Rutherford, Hord, Huling and Hall, 1983, page 23.)

Much study and development has occurred since McCall and Lombardo's 1978 assessment, and as suggested, there are an increasing number of ideas and explanations for what is called leadership. Charismatic and visionary leadership have gained currency, while instructional leadership has now become commonplace in the lexicon of education. An extensive discussion of these concepts and theories is not the purpose of this paper; rather, the objective is to glean from the extant literature what it is that the executive educator, the superintendent, does that manifests leadership. For this purpose, a few words are in order to declare what "leadership" means.

There has been a long-argued exploration of the distinction between *management* and *leadership*. The concepts seem frequently confused in the literature; however, many researchers have made a clear distinction. Gardner (1986) suggests that *leadership* is "the process of persuasion and example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to take action that is in accord with the leader's purposes or the shared purposes of all" (page 6).

Further, he reserves the term *managers* for "individuals who hold a directive post in an organization... to preside over the processes by which the organization functions, to allocate resources prudently, to make the best possible use of people. . ." (Gardner, 1986, page 7). Tosi (1982) agrees with Gardner that "leading is an influence process; managing may be seen as the act of making choices about the form and structure of those factors that fall within the boundaries of managerial discretion" (page 233).

Duttweiler and Hord (1987) review these contrasts as they relate to the leadership of principals; the analyses appear appropriate for superintendents' leadership also. Management would involve the "allocation of financial and other resources; the planning and implementing of organizational features; and the provision of actions, arrangements, and activities needed for the school (district, in the case of superintendent, instead of school) to reach its goals" (Duttweiler and Hord, 1987, referencing Sergiovanni, 1987). Duttweiler and Hord cite Ubben and Hughes (1987): management is "composed of those activities concerned with procuring, coordinating, and deploying material and the personnel needed to accomplish the goals of the organization" (Ubben and Hughes, 1987, page 6). Burns (1978) clarified the distinction between the role of *manager*, who negotiates reasonable exchanges or *transactions* with employees to gain employee efforts in exchange for certain rewards, and the role of *leader*, who centers efforts on *transforming* the organization. Tichy and Devanna's writing on corporate leadership, *The Transformational Leader* (1986), returns to Burn's ideas. These authors assert that managers change little, managing what they find and leaving things much as they found them when they move on. Leadership, transformational leadership, is about change, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Tichy and Devanna explain, "... these are not the provinces of lonely, half-mad individuals with flashes of genius. Rather, this . . . is a behavioral process... that is systematic, consisting of purposeful and organized searches for changes, systematic analysis, and the capacity to move... a new way of thinking. . . as an everyday way of acting" (page 27). The leader transforms the organization according to a vision of where it should be moving.

Davidson (1987) focuses on the confusion about leadership and management, acknowledging that an effective leader requires many of the skills of the effective manager; Davidson, too, cites leaders as those who give the organization the vision and direction needed by managers for operating within the organization. A key element of leadership for the superintendent is "the diligent search for quality or excellence in the educational program" (Davidson, 1987,

page 276), with the key words here *educational program,* rather than management procedures.

Rhodes (1987) likens the superintendent to "convoy commander" (page 19), suggesting that the means by which convoy leaders organize, the roles they play, and the strategies by which they operate have relevance for the operation of school systems. These fleet commanders have a special relationship with the "ships in the fleet" (schools, in the superintendent's case): the convoy leader leads while making it possible and necessary for each ship's captain to lead also. This analogy points to the idea of *leading* rather than leadership. Immegart (1988) urges a new focus on the act of *leading*, or investigating "what leaders do" (page 273). Studying leaders' activities would seem to be a promising means to inform our understanding of leadership. Duke (1986) synthesizes the behaviors through which we learn what leaders do in their everyday activities:

> **Direction**. Leadership provides a sense of direction. Direction is more than a course to follow. It is a path to follow. It is a path together with a reason for traveling it. Direction presumes meaning.
>
> **Engagement**. Where there are people there are feelings, thoughts, and aspirations. Leadership is distinguishable from management, in part, because of the extent to which it is capable of engaging these feelings, thoughts, and aspirations.
>
> **Fit**. To some extent such properties as direction and engagement are dependent on the relationship between leaders and their times. No leader fully controls such a relationship. A continuing interaction takes place between leaders, their followers, and the culture in which they exist.
>
> **Originality**. Originality refers to the capacity of a leader to capture the imagination through uniqueness – in ideas, behavior, programs, and so on. Leadership, almost by nature, defies generalizability and predictability.
>
> **Dramatics**. Leadership is a realm of ritual, ceremony, and dramatic performance. Leaders speak of feeling as if they were always *on stage*. Memorable performances by leaders help over-

come the problem of public recognition and serve to evoke the feelings that are necessary for action.

Design. Leadership is not only dramatic performance. It also entails the transformation of vision into reality. This process is essentially creative.

Orchestration. Leaders frequently are called upon to bring together individuals for the sake of accomplishing goals. When they are successful in coordinating the energies of an assortment of people with different abilities, their efforts can be likened to those of a gifted conductor blending together elements of sound to produce an integrated piece of music. (Cited in Duttweiler and Hord, 1987, pages 64-65.)

In Summary

This quick journey across varied perspectives on leadership and the expectations for the superintendent's exercise of leadership has been undertaken to frame the materials that follow.

We now turn to a review of the literature on superintendents; views and opinions about how superintendents should or could lead are explored, as well as what they do to demonstrate leadership for instruction. We shall be looking for descriptions of *leading*, rather than *managing*, which is outside the realm of interest of this paper. Managers have been described as leaving things as they were found; leaders transform their organization by way of leading the organization to where it hasn't been — vis-a-vis a vision of change and instructional improvement — a new role expectation for executive educators.

VIEWS OF SUPERINTENDENTS' ROLES

The 1967-1980 research on school administrators reviewed by Bridges (1982) revealed little differences from reviews done a decade and a half earlier. The more recent studies "proved to be atheoretical... seemed to have little or no practical utility" (page 25). These studies, for the most part targeting principals and superintendents, continued to rely on "survey research designs, questionnaires of dubious reliability and validity, and relatively simplistic types of statistical analyses" (page 24). Furthermore, two of the most abundantly studied variables were traits and attitudes, causing Bridges to conclude, like earlier researchers, "The utility of such research is simply underwhelming in relation to its volume" (page 26, Bridges quoting Vernon, 1964). Bridges notes that despite the fact that the superintendent is ultimately responsible for the moral and technical socialization of youth and in this pursuit manages a multi-million dollar enterprise, little has been known about superintendents' work and its effectiveness. Slowly this is changing and more recent studies are providing illumination and insight.

Reasons for a new focus on the executive office are cited by Wimpelberg (1988), who contends that this office has "the greatest potential any leadership has to make a difference. This condition alone makes the new study of superintendents and instructional leadership imperative" (page 307). Wimpelberg anticipates a significant expansion of the literature on superintendents and their relationship to instruction and student achievement.

Incumbents' Views

In 1974, Merrow, Foster, and Estes assessed school superintendents as being "vividly aware of their tenuous hold on the job" and focusing on "survival — not getting fired *and* doing a good job" (page 1). By 1988, this view had not changed much among *older* men and women occupying the role. In a study seeking to determine whether gender was a major factor in how district administrators viewed their role, 50 percent of men and women saw themselves as leaders while 50 percent viewed themselves as managers. However, "both men and women over the age of 45 viewed themselves as managers," while those district administrators in the study under 45 considered themselves leaders (Youngs, 1988, page 9). The Educational Research Service developed profiles of school superintendents from four sources of data: the Educator Opinion Poll, the

National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools, the National Survey of Fringe Benefits in Public Schools, and the Local School Budget Profile Survey. The resultant profiles indicate that 68 percent of all superintendents belong to the AASA (American Association of School Administrators) and 90 percent to their state association of school administrators (Characteristics of Public School Superintendents, 1986, page 29). These memberships would appear to provide an opportunity for perception sharing and exchange of views of the "managers" and the "leaders." But perhaps this "across the age gap" networking does not occur.

The ranks of the superintendency are male (95 percent); they "range in age from 27 to 68 and average 49 years" (Characteristics of Public School Superintendents, 1986, page 29). What do the incumbents view overall as the most important goal of education? Command of the basic skills is most important, and 80 percent are satisfied with the level of attention given to basic skills but 16 percent would like to see the focus increased (Characteristics of Public School Superintendents, 1986, page 29). What skills and performance areas do superintendents envision for their own role in the enterprise? In a study of 451 Texas superintendents, three performance areas were identified as being most important to the respondents:

1. Manages and is responsible for all school *finance* issues of the school district.

2. Establishes and maintains a positive and open learning environment to bring about the motivation and social integration of students and staff (*climate*).

3. Develops and delivers an effective *curriculum* that expands the definitions of literacy competency and cultural integration to include advanced technologies, problem solving, critical thinking and communication skills, and cultural enrichment for all students. (Collier, 1987, page 121)

In additional efforts to identify superintendents' views of their role, job performance statements were identified, reviewed, and validated through a state-wide (Texas) geographically representative group of 100 superintendent practitioners. Using the Delphi Method, a total of 38 statements were validated in nine areas: school climate, school improvement, instructional management,

personnel management, administration and fiscal/facilities management, student management, board/superintendent relations, professional growth and development, and school/community relations (see Appendix A for the 38 statements).

To be sure, this paper is not directed at a thorough examination of the complete superintendent's role. However, for the instructional leadership dimension of the superintendency to be adequately understood, it must be understood within its total role and organizational context (Crowson, 1987), for the superintendent's leadership resides within that context. This brief review of how superintendents view their responsibilities provides one perspective for illuminating the important subset of leadership performances (see, for example, the LEAD Center performance statements 5-13, 15, 30, 31 in Appendix A).

There are additional views of the superintendent's role, for instance, those of school boards. Boards carry the authority of their position and can be highly influential. These perspectives are examined in the next section.

School Boards' Views

The school board, of course, has a vested interest in the superintendent's role, and the superintendent's contract is a means to establish basic board policy for the superintendent's performance, in addition to the goals it wants the executive to achieve (Schaible, 1981). The contract should serve as a communication device concerning the expectations of each party, so that both may reach their goals. Advertisements for superintendent positions (a sample of more than 1,000) indicate boards' expectations for the position, which is assessed as demanding and requiring the performance of a wide variety of tasks (Chand, 1983). Chand studied board requirements and found that 35 percent of the districts (small, medium, large; urban, suburban, or rural; located in any state of the nation) required the candidate to have management/administrative skills and/or leadership skills and experience (Chand, 1983, page 9). As indicated by these advertisements, the tasks required of superintendents focused on curriculum 10.3 percent; school finance 10.3 percent; community, staff, board, public relations 8.7 percent; collective bargaining 3.8 percent; bilingual/cross- cultural education 2.9 percent; communication skills 2.9 percent; personnel management 2.5 percent; planning 1.6 percent; ability to delegate 1.6 percent; school loans 1.1 percent; and others receiving less than 1 percent mention (Chand, 1983, page 9).

According to AASA, a superintendent's contract should be a statement of professional responsibilities and be as concise as possible, eliminating extensive listings of generalized statements of duty. It should be specific in describing the superintendent as "the chief executive officer of the board and the chief administrative officer of the district" (*The Superintendent's Contract*, 1979, page 13). A concise listing of responsibilities has been identified by AASA about what a school board should expect its superintendent to do:

> Serve as its chief executive officer.
>
> Be its professional adviser in all matters and recommend appropriate school policies for its consideration.
>
> Implement and execute board policy.
>
> Keep it fully and accurately informed about the school program.
>
> Interpret the needs of the school system.
>
> Present his/her professional recommendations on all problems and issues for board consideration.
>
> Devote a great share of thought and time to the improvement of instruction.
>
> Be alert to advances and improvements in educational programs, wherever they may be found.
>
> Lead in the development and operations of an adequate program of school community relations.
>
> Participate in community activities.
>
> Use great care in nominating candidates for appointment to the school staff.
>
> Recommend for purchase equipment, books, and supplies that are appropriate to the purposes and needs of the school system.

> Present for the board's consideration an annual budget that is designed to serve the needs of the school system.
>
> Establish and oversee the financial operations of the school district to ensure adherence to budget provisions and the wise use of school funds.
>
> Be a skilled politician in order to work effectively with his or her many publics. (*Selecting a Superintendent*, 1979, pages 35-37)

Yet each school district, each board, has its own specific needs, its own specific knowledge of the situation at hand, its own basic list of intangibles it is seeking in a superintendent of schools. Thus, local needs must be applied to the search, in addition to the expectations suggested above, or the entire quest for a new superintendent may be futile. However, Salley (1979-80) maintains that boards give more attention to a candidate's personal qualities than to what the potential superintendent should do and the skills required to do it.

The AASA has articulated a useful and comprehensive generic list of what school boards should expect a superintendent to do. In a specific context, Kennedy and Barker (1986) report the views of rural school boards when hiring a superintendent. What characteristics are common for successful rural school superintendents? In a study to answer these questions, 93 school board presidents in 42 states in districts with enrollments 300 or fewer were surveyed. According to these school board presidents, major issues facing superintendents were those of securing adequate school monies, improving school curriculum, securing and retaining teachers, and student achievement (Kennedy and Barker, 1986, page 4). What characteristics distinguished rural effective superintendents in addressing these issues? "Ability to communicate and work cooperatively and effectively with others . . . financial and organizational management . . . interest and ability to live and work in a small community" (Kennedy and Barker, 1986, page 5). There was strong agreement that superintendents should be "leaders in encouraging involvement and activity in the schools" (page 6). Other important traits included having "high moral and/or religious values, understanding the sociological implications of living in a small community, and being aware of current research practices and innovations in education" (page 6).

A study was conducted to identify the professional competencies deemed

most desirable for superintendents as perceived by board members and superintendents in South Dakota (Haugland, 1987). Interesting differences of perceptions were revealed, although the lists from the two perspectives are remarkably alike. School board members and superintendents ranked superintendent competencies as follows (from Haugland, 1987, page 41):

School Board Members	**Superintendents**
1) Personnel Management	Superintendent/Board relations
2) School Finance	Personnel Management
3) Curriculum Development	Public Relations
4) Accomplishing goals set by Board	School Finance
5) Superintendent/Board Relations	Accomplishing goals set by Board
6) Public relations	Curriculum Development
7) Policy formulation	Policy formulation
8) School construction	School construction & collective negotiations (tied for eighth).
9) Collective negotiations	

Board members and superintendents ranked the competencies in a different order, with board members perceiving personnel management as the key to a successful educational system and wanting the "superintendent to be the educational leader of the school while handling the district's finances in a professional manner" (Haugland, 1987, page 42).

Additional findings from the Haugland study were obtained through analyzing the data by district enrollment size: board members in small districts were more concerned about school finance, whereas board members in medium and large districts deemed personnel management most important. Superintendents in small and medium size districts ranked personnel management

first, while those in large districts rated superintendent/board relations as primary.

In a national survey of superintendents and school boards, areas of disagreement about the roles of boards and superintendents were identified (Alvey and Underwood, 1985). The "greatest disagreement exists in matters pertaining to personnel: Superintendents want more authority; so do board members" (page 21). Board members, in fact, would like more responsibility, and while superintendents appear willing to give up a part of what they perceive as their authority, it is "seldom as much as board members want them to . . . a tug-of-war is going on in many school systems . . . Board members are pulling on one end of the rope and superintendents on the other, each trying to edge more responsibility to his side of the line. And on some issues — especially those concerning personnel — the rope is stretched taut as a piano wire . . . most of the disagreement is over hiring, firing, promoting, or transferring staff members" (page 21). Personnel management appears to be the real conflict, rather than prioritizing competencies.

This section of the paper addresses school board views of superintendent roles, and the ensuing dilemmas that result when superintendents' and boards' views are divergent. Several writers provide insights about the differing perceptions and make suggestions, suggestions that add to understanding these differences. For example, to alleviate some of the tensions, Katz (1985) suggests that boards and superintendents consider their working styles as a means for reducing the possibilities for friction: "some administrative styles work better with some school boards than with others" (page 33). Considering styles when hiring a new executive officer or when accepting the executive position can reduce future tension; such consideration also can help defuse a tough situation "when the board and superintendent are smoldering slowly on the way to a blow-up" (page 33). Katz asserts that school board styles tend to be either *corporate* or *familial* — the one very formal (i.e. IBM) and the other, behaving like "a group of family elders, making decisions for a large, loosely connected clan of cousins, children, and in-laws" (page 33). The styles of corporate executives have been variously described as *task* and *relationship* and are easily applied to the superintendent. One of these characteristics is likely to be dominant and it is likely to prevail. Is the superintendent predominantly task or relationship-oriented? Is the board predominantly corporate or familial in its operational style? Katz hypothesizes that matching these two leadership factions could be an important consideration for supporting district harmony. A study to test

these hypotheses in districts of varying size and other dimensions could be useful.

In a 1986 study of board and superintendent relationships, Hentges asks the question *"Who governs?"* Conclusions of the study differentiate the sources of power in decision-making and leadership, with superintendents and school boards sharing in the balance of power: superintendents appear to "predominate when decisions involve *internal* policy issues . . . school boards tend to assert their pre-dominance when *external* policy issues are under consideration" (Hentges, 1986, page 31). Hentges asserts that "a leader is one who is only a few steps ahead of the parade, not too far in front, not marching alone" (page 28). Maintaining this delicate leadership/power balance seems to occur when the superintendent governs over internal matters of the school system where his professional technical expertise is of significant importance. This reserves the external issues that are visible and that have immediate impact on the community (such as school closings and busing) to the board. Hentges suggests that the views and opinions of the public carry "as much weight" as the technical expertise of the chief executive and the educational staff.

The changing nature of school leadership expected of chief executives has been significantly impacted by the emerging importance of politics and action-oriented interest groups. Lupini (1983) argues that the politicization of public education has resulted in more active involvement of board members in administrative matters, an area that was traditionally the domain of the professional. This board involvement appears to be shifting from part-time to full-time. In the past, the superintendent was able to exert considerable influence on board policy; this may no longer be the case. In many districts the superintendent "will learn all too quickly the realities of the world of politics where, unlike any other reasonable world, expertise and knowledge must get behind clout" (page 5). Lupini cites Cuban's three ideal types of superintendents that have been successful at varying times: the teacher/scholar, the chief administrator, and the negotiator/statesman (Cuban, 1985). In highly politicized conditions, Lupini advises the executive leader to assume a mediating role, described by Andrews (1977):

> In the present political context of schools, educational leadership can be achieved not by ignoring the need for successful mediation, but by building on top of it. In this higher style the school superintendent uses his professional background and good

> judgment to take a positive position on the issue in question. He enters into the fray of opposing views as a pressure group in his own right. (page 32)

The superintendent, however, must also execute a balance of competing forces to make a "sanctuary" for independent and shared decision making. The executive needs to listen well in order to persuade and mobilize people. In resolving conflict, it is important to insulate the most critical priorities (from conflict), while other conflicts continue.

Another way to balance competing forces is through consensus building. Bacharach and Mitchell's (1981) study of critical variables in forming and maintaining consensus in school districts provides a framework for analyzing and acting upon factors identified as affecting consensus. In six central New York districts, case studies were used to study district governance and administration. Eight variables were identified as affecting consensus: the environmental constraints under which the district operates; the degree of district-level staff expertise; the unity of the administrative realm; the leadership ability of the superintendent (and the strategies and tactics employed by this executive); the coalition behavior of teachers; and the stability of the values placed on the critical variables that characterize the district. Some dissent about change is necessary, as a district characterized by consistent consensus may be unable to change and adapt; the ability to adapt is crucial. In contrast, a district characterized by a total lack of consensus would be "paralyzed and unable to act." The authors maintain that the politics of consensus can be manipulated through careful analysis of the eight critical variables and "judicious changes . . . can be an effective tactic for dealing with conflict" (page 93).

The Views of Others

Referencing Peter Drucker (1969), Marc Tucker (1988) has described how manual work has been declining for the past 20 years and how knowledge work has been increasing. Tucker reports also two important observations made by Drucker: first, investments in education, training, and retraining will win the economic race for countries although American management knows very little about "managing people who think for a living," and second, this country will be in great difficulty "until management could create work environments in which knowledge workers could be productive" (Tucker, 1988, page 44). Tucker further challenges the school board and superintendent to move to management of

people who think for a living, rather than of those who are told what to do. This challenge, Tucker opines, is shared by almost every American corporation today and is a basic dimension of restructuring schools.

Schlechty and Joslin (1986) also discuss knowledge workers and other metaphors of schools:

school as a factory
school as a hospital
school as a log
school as a family
school as a war zone
school as a knowledge work organization.

In their discussion, they point out that knowledge work will be the dominant occupation of our country. The implication for schools is to view the teacher in a decision-sharing role, one that requires a re-design of authority relationships. Principals would become a manager of managers (teachers) and evaluation would become results-oriented. Some functions would be decentralized and others would not. "The establishment and articulation of superordinate goals and binding myths is necessarily a function of the top administration of the organization. . . what the school system is about, where the school system is going, and what problems must be given priority must be preached from the superintendent's office. . . must reside with the chief executive officer" (Schlechty and Joslin, 1986, pages 158-159). From their analysis, these writers maintain that "the superintendent is or should be the chief teacher in the school system — the person who defines problems and inspires others to solve them. Leadership, then, is more important than managerial skill, though managerial skill is not to be discounted" (page 159). Not to be ignored is the very important responsibility for bottom-line results, and this is the responsibility of the chief executive officer.

The bottom-line responsibility suggests "more than just agreeing to do a job" according to AASA's *Principles of Effective School District Governance and Administration* (1984). It involves an array of commitments: to the board, staff, students, and community. The principles include a suggested list of responsibilities for the superintendent:

1. To serve as the board's chief executive officer and adviser.

2. To provide leadership for the district's educational programs.

3. To provide leadership for the district's long range strategic and short range operational plans.

4. To describe for the board the successes, needs, and challenges facing the school system.

5. To recommend policy options to the board with specific recommendations when circumstances require new policies or the revision of existing ones.

6. To keep the board informed through sharing timely and accurate information.

7. To recommend and assign members of the administrative team. (The superintendent generally oversees the development of appropriate job descriptions and ensures that they are followed. As a rule, the superintendent submits employment recommendations to the board for final approval.)

8. To ensure an adequate evaluation/performance review system for district personnel and programs in accordance with district policies.

9. To develop, recommend for approval, and administer the school district's budget and overall financial plan.

10. To provide periodic progress reports on selected district policy.

11. To consult with the board as part of the process of developing district-wide goals and objectives.

12. To develop and inform the board, administration, and staff of administrative procedures needed to implement board policy.

13. To ensure the management of the district's day-to-day operations.

14. To provide an ever-present orientation that the overriding mission of the school system is education. (pages 4-5)

In 1985, AASA published an explication of skills required for successful school leaders that is a training text for those aspiring to be successful. A sampling of these skills follows (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1985):

> Skills in designing, implementing, and evaluating school climate improvement programs, undergirded with mutual efforts by staff and students to formulate and attain school goals.
>
> Skills in understanding internal and external communications and political skills and using them to build local, state, and national support for education.
>
> Skills in designing staff development and evaluation systems to enhance effectiveness of educational personnel.
>
> Skills in allocating human, material, and financial resources efficiently, in an accountable manner to ensure successful student learning.
>
> Skills in conducting research and using research findings in decision making to improve long range planning, school operations, and student learning.

As the superintendent looks ahead to roles for the twenty-first century, Estes (1988) cites possibilities for change in school system organization and the executive leader's role: successful schools will become decentralized units; principals and teachers will work collegially to meet challenges; goal setting, personnel selection, allocation of resources and staff development will move from the central office to the school. "How will the superintendent exercise supervisory influence over organizations that are becoming increasingly decentralized and autonomous? Can the superintendent continue to be an instructional leader in an environment where the building principal and faculty teams are on the cutting edge of innovation?" (Estes, 1988, page 28). He suggests that superintendents will require "professional skill in exercising influence over these administrative components: the principal, the work structure, the school culture, technology and student outcomes" (Estes, 1988, page 28). This view of the role raises specific and challenging questions that identify considerations for

the next century's executives of school systems.

Shepherd (1986) cautions that the tenure of superintendents declined during the 1970s and '80s, and identifies strategies that can enhance the survival of both superintendents' roles and their plans. First, they should develop a vision of the school district's direction that they can share with staff, students and community in terms of goals and a plan. A second strategy is that superintendents should establish their independence from politics by resisting compromises when educational principles are at stake. As a third strategy, they should apply the game of poker and be able to read human behavior, assess attitudes, recognize when to abandon positions, and understand and adjust their own conflict-resolution styles. One might inquire whether Shepherd's strategies are alternative or simultaneous, contradictory or not. Does Shepherd's superintendent negotiate for principles/political commitment where support is acquired overall, or is the negotiation for political "deals," one at a time? We are not informed.

The Education Commission of the States (1983, pages 4-8) proposes eight broad action recommendations that could be in the purview of the superintendent:

1) Develop, and put into effect as promptly as possible, plans for improving education in the public schools from kindergarten through grade 12.

2) Create broader and more effective partnerships for improving education in the states and communities of the nation.

3) Marshal the resources that are essential for improving the public schools.

4) Express a new and higher regard for teachers and for the profession of teaching.

5) Make the academic experience more intense and more productive.

6) Provide quality assurance in education.

7) Improve leadership and management in schools.

8) Serve better those students who are now unserved or underserved.

In looking at the community school district superintendent, the competencies of community educators should be thought of in terms of the "stewardship that a position holds... to allocate resources, be agents for the exercising of independence and initiative, being accountable for the assignment we've been given, and be able to assess and identify the needs for improvement of programs in the future" (Hyatt, 1980, page 13). No small set of tasks.

Nottingham (1985) portrays professional expectations for the skills of a superintendent. The skills, which are organized in three sets, include technical skills: having language skills, understanding teaching and being a teacher, being current on learning theory, being familiar with a variety of curricula, and acting as liaison between the board and the staff. Conceptual skills, the second set, include being a visionary, clarifying goals, understanding organizational systems, having good judgement, and understanding community power structures. The third set, human skills or attributes, encompasses important qualities including negotiation abilities, catalytic leadership, empathy, high expectations, loyalty, maturity, and last — a sense of humor.

The 571 schools included in the first three years (1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85) of the U.S. Department of Education's Secondary School Recognition Program were studied and themes emerged that characterized the secondary schools (Corcoran and Wilson, 1986). These themes were reviewed and *defined from a district perspective*, with enhancing information supplied from interviews with selected central office staffs and secondary school principals (Miller, Smey-Richman and Woods-Houston, 1987). The nine identified themes follow (Miller, et al., 1987, page 2), as well as suggestions for the actions of superintendents:

1) clear goals and core values — a sense of shared purpose, goals, and priorities among students, faculty, parents, and the community

2) leadership in action — dynamic, powerful leaders who recognize people's strengths and allow them to maximize their skills

3) control and discretion — the balance of loose-tight controls

that contribute to overall school success

4) good people and a good environment — high degrees of collegiality and teacher professionalism as well as a safe and comfortable physical environment

5) recognition and rewards for teaching — appreciation and acknowledgment for accomplishments and efforts

6) positive student-teacher relationships — an environment where students and faculty work together to achieve shared goals

7) high expectations and recognition of achievement — creating learning opportunities for all students and acknowledging their accomplishments

8) solving problems and improving the schools — assuming a "can do" attitude and treating problems as challenges that can be overcome

9) working in the community — positive interactions with the community that generate good school-community relations

Suggestions from top-level district policy makers and decision makers were obtained by the researchers from the interviews. The interview data suggested that district superintendents should develop policies in goal setting, leadership through school-site management, teacher incentives and student rewards, and school-community relations. Schlechty (1985) also has maintained that board members and superintendents have a responsibility to develop district policies fostering themes such as clear goals. The superintendent then becomes a person responsible for supporting schools and guiding them in efforts to become more successful. It is clear that the superintendent then would have multiple roles to exercise in order to nurture, support and monitor school change initiatives from the district level.

In Summary

An array of perspectives on the superintendent's role has been presented in this section. These views came from chief executives, some of whom view themselves as managers, some as leaders. Other views came from expectations expressed by school boards, from various researchers, from writers of the literature focused on the superintendent, and from public demands for school change and improvement. The perspectives contain various hints, clues, or board directives (typically ill-defined) to the superintendent for leadership. School boards express interest in the superintendent's capability to manage personnel and finances, while they disagree about the area and degree of the superintendent's license for demonstrating leadership, thus providing a basis for conflict. Personnel matters also seem to provoke considerable conflict. Yet the public insists that schools are not good enough, and looks to the superintendent as the person ultimately responsible for system change, especially as related to a new national/international economy based on knowledge production and utilization.

It has been suggested that many superintendents are operating in a survival mode and that they are more satisfied with their schools than the public is. School boards, representing the public, have identified roles and expectations for their superintendents, but superintendent/board relations are reported frequently to be stressful and strained. Community interest groups and political action further exacerbate board/executive harmony. In short, the superintendent is to be all things to all people — not easy for task accomplishment.

Nonetheless, superintendents view their performance to be primarily in the areas of financial responsibility, appropriate climate development, and curriculum design. Boards focus on the tasks associated with finance, curriculum, and staff/personnel with decision-making given to the superintendent when it involves policy internal to the system. Boards take the decisions for external matters. In addition to superintendents and boards, others situated outside the confines or restraints of the school system promote extensive lists of skills, tasks, and responsibilities that should accrue to the superintendent.

This brief sampling of the superintendent's role expectations provides a backdrop against which to consider what superintendents can and, in fact, do when they provide leadership for their district.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND THE SUPERINTENDENT

As suggested previously in this paper, few studies have explored the effect of superintendents on schools (Crowson, 1987), and Murphy and Hallinger (1986) point out that "research on the superintendency in general is remarkably thin, while research on the leadership role of superintendents is sparser still" (page 214). In the literature, much of which is not research-based, the school district chief has become increasingly portrayed as occupying "a high-conflict managerial position" (Crowson, 1987, page 51), and the key to entry into the position is seen as heavy reliance on an influential "placement baron," though one might wonder about the desirablility of such an office. Once in the position, the "place-bound" superintendents (those who do not wish to move out and on) tend to tighten down existing policies and practices to maintain the status-quo (no change or leadership), while "career-bound" or upwardly mobile superintendents create new rules and direct the system in new ways. Whatever the case, as Crowson opines (1987, page 60), "the superintendent is the prime person in each school district in developing a sense of mission, establishing a positive climate and overseeing the implementation of the mission."

Advice About Superintendents' Leadership

Marks (1981) admonishes the superintendent to become more externally oriented, to assume a "societal architect role" (page 255) in order to shape the curriculum and program environment in new directions, using a variety of marketing strategies, integrating human relations skills, seeking innovative funding sources, and establishing a school philosophy of service and education. Marks promotes the idea of superintendents assisting in society's future design, instead of responding to the current conditions. To do this, real leadership will be required and this leadership will be based on the superintendent

> spending time dreaming about how to learn new knowledge and gain new information;
>
> spending time contemplating and speculating about how to shape their situation "to do what they want to do. They cannot afford to believe that their environments control them or their actions" (page 257);

> realizing that he/she and the district staff have more potential than is normally used, and involving staff in activities and opportunities so that they use their fullest potential;
>
> becoming unpredictable and unable to be classified (as liberal, moderate, conservative);
>
> grasping the moment to create change that "makes a difference for children" and manipulating crisis, reducing it, using it effectively, and stopping it when it serves the district's best interests;
>
> using power constructively to bring about positive change earned through "cooperation, intelligent and creative problem-solving, involvement of all the members of the team, and provision for everyone to experience some success each day" (page 257).

Marks (1981) further contends that:

> Leaders must understand the notion that leadership is a phenomenon of opportunity — creating the right idea for the right place at the right moment.
>
> Problems are opportunities that can be cornerstones for leadership.
>
> Leaders grasp problems in an effort to move their ideas. (page 258)

Last, Marks advises that the chief educational leader must seek an image as "an educator, not a manager, a politician, or a jack-of-all trades . . . must lead with style, mystery, and enthusiasm" (page 258).

Cuban, however, emphasizes that for a superintendent to practice "real leadership," three roles must be played simultaneously: politician, manager, and teacher (1985). Cuban explains "politics as the act of the possible" when superintendents and school boards form coalitions to support the school's mission. Typically, such activities are cited as public relations or involvement in community, but the "accurate term is politics." The managerial role is required for organizational stability, employing the functions of planning

through evaluation. The superintendent is also a teacher, sometimes (though rarely) serving as a substitute teacher, teaching board members the routines of their position, being actively involved in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Cuban suggests:

> If managing a school district is akin to fire prevention and if a superintendent's political skills keep the blazes that inevitably erupt under control, then the superintendent-as-teacher serves as the fire starter, because his or her goal is to alter the thinking and actions of board members, school personnel, and the community at large. Paradoxically, then, the three roles of the superintendent are to provoke, contain, and repress conflict. (page 30)

Griffin (1981) and Marks and Nystrand (1981) focus on the superintendent's leadership function in curriculum and program development. The objective, Griffin says, is "to create a school program for the child rather than to provide programs into which we must fit children" (page 150). To do this the superintendent will require vitality in leadership style (Griffin, 1981) and will put "status, career, and security on the line in support of change that touches intimately the present and future lives of children, the daily experience of teachers, and the expectations and hopes of parents" (Marks and Nystrand, page 71). If the superintendent assumes curriculum and instruction as the primary leadership mandate, Marks and Nystrand ask important questions about how the leadership function will be exercised: How to maneuver in the political arena successfully so that the objective is reached? How to handle interest group pressure? How to manage collective bargaining? How to administer the various other obligations and responsibilities that can (and not necessarily unreasonably) direct attention from the central vision of developing curriculum and instructional programs?

Griffin answers. He identifies four leadership behavior paths or "dimensions" and proposes the use of one:

> 1) power leadership dimension addresses the legal element and is analyzed and defined operationally in terms of laws, policies, and procedures . . . places primary emphasis on control, chain of command, and downward flow of orders . . . does not encourage input from others in decision making;

2) persuasion leadership dimension concerns the social aspect, is analyzed and defined operationally in terms of personality, motivation, and acceptance . . . focuses on human skills of executive leadership . . . strives to involve everyone in decision making, to motivate each person to contribute fully to the plan, and to seek total acceptance by all of the program;

3) the conciliation dimension is a middle-of-the-road approach that trails midway between the Power Path and the Persuasion Path, and is defined operationally in terms of pressure, arbitration, and compromise;

4) the vital dimension addresses alternative actions and is analyzed less in terms of the nature of a predetermined course of leadership behavior and more in terms of a process by which decisions can be made . . . characterized by mobility of direction, interrelationships among personnel, extensive communication systems, and a panoramic view of . . . operational considerations. (pages 150 - 151)

Griffin recommends the vital form of leadership, maintaining that this procedure approaches each new situation in terms of its unique factors and that "the public will require unconventional leadership behavior on the part of public school superintendents — a leadership style characterized by vitality" (page 172).

On what factors are superintendents assessed to be effective leaders? Several studies provide some clues.

In 1985, Thomas reviewed history and examined changes that have occurred in the superintendency in the past three decades and explained that "power was increasingly diffused more among the people and not concentrated as much in leaders" (page 2). Looking for explanations about the general lack of leadership in schools, Thomas found that changes generally in society reduced the influence of most offices, including the superintendency (page 3):

1. People no longer had great confidence in any level of government — local or national.

2. Board membership changed. Activists who were elected to school boards had less trust in the professionals than former board members.

3. Parents were better educated and wanted part of the action. The father image of superintendents was no longer sufficient.

4. Teacher power increased, thereby reducing the power of school administrators.

5. The general decline in test scores tarnished the image of educational leaders.

6. Declining enrollment and an aging population presented different problems than those which most school administrators had been educated to solve.

Nonetheless, there have been outstanding superintendents during this 30-year period; some of these superintendents have been "technicians, some evangelists, and others motivators. All, however, seem to have tremendous energy levels, strong intellects, and a deep commitment to education . . enjoy their work, speak well of their profession . . . " (Thomas, 1985, page 9). Energy, intellect, and commitment appear to be necessary aspects for high and visible success in superintending, as proposed by Thomas.

Norris (1986) proposes another factor deemed necessary for superintendent leadership: brain dominance. Norris reports about research exploring brain dominance styles of outstanding leaders. The findings suggest that superintendents have a left-brained style of problem solving, providing them ability in "technical rather than visionary expertise" (page 24). This orientation is opposite to strong needs for conceptual ability at the top of the system. The superintendency has been characterized as a role demanding "spontaneous decision making, flexibility, and an intuitive feel for the organization.... strong right-brained skills of intuition and conceptualization must accompany analytical ability" (page 24). Data from the study suggest that female educators exhibit a greater tendency to "holistic thought patterns and conceptualization than do the males surveyed" (page 25). In any case, Norris maintains that leaders must develop a new perspective: "visionary, intuitive, and oriented to the building of human potential" (page 26).

In a study to identify educational values that prompted superintendent practices, a highly reputed educational leader/superintendent who was "outstandingly effective in providing leadership for instructional programs" and in successful "resource management of the district" was observed (Aplin, 1984). The study assumed that clarity of professional values is related to role effectiveness and that the superintendent's educational values impact the administrative behaviors of others. The findings indicated that the superintendent:

> value 1) held the instructional program to be the highest priority of the system and decisions were assessed as to whether they enhanced or threatened it;
>
> value 2) expressed a norm of equity in personal relationships and instructional decisions, and administration and staff expressed understanding of the expectation that students should be provided what was needed for successful learning;
>
> value 3) used delegation, teaming, flexibility of process and extensive communication to achieve a widespread sense of ownership of system programs;
>
> value 4) reserved and maintained a high level of local control by offering possibilities for piloting ideas and providing autonomy;
>
> value 5) believed in improving the quality of decisions by free and honest disclosure among all interested parties.

There was widespread adoption of the values and practices of the superintendent by the district's administrators, who perceived they were valued by the superintendent (Aplin, 1984).

In contrast to Aplin's field study of one effective superintendent, a national survey of 157 effective superintendents asked respondents about the relative importance of skills required for job performance (Sclafani and Collier, 1988). Ninety-six of these superintendents responded. They considered financial planning and program budgeting less important than "using an array of human relation skills" and "communicating and projecting an articulate position for education." Howe r, the effective superintendents focused not on one important skill, but on a broad array of leadership skills" (page 14).

In a state-wide study of the leadership style effectiveness of elected and appointed Mississippi superintendents, the administrators were assessed on two dimensions of leadership: concern for performance of the organization and concern for relationship needs of the persons in the organization (Barnett, 1982). Their school board presidents, the superintendents themselves, and a representative sample of principals were polled. The findings suggested that appointed superintendents have a greater consensus among superiors and subordinates on their leadership style effectiveness. No conclusive evidence supported the hypothesis that leadership style effectiveness differed between elected and appointed superintendents. Significant differences were observed between superintendents' self perceptions and the perceptions of their superiors and subordinates (Barnett, 1982), leading one to paraphrase: leadership style is in the eye of the beholder.

Gerardi (1983) studied mobile (i.e., held more positions, spent fewer number of years in each position) and non-mobile superintendents to identify distinguishing characteristics, if any, and to determine differences in leadership behavior characteristics. The study of all superintendents in Massachusetts revealed significant differences in that mobile superintendents (page 182)

> were more often tenured, had higher status in the profession, and felt a deadline was a challenge rather than a nuisance.

Leadership behavior characteristics were measured by the LBDQ (Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire), which was administered to the superintendents and their immediate subordinates. The subordinates of the career-bound (mobile) superintendents ranked their superintendents higher on more of the scales than did the subordinates of the place-bound (non-mobile) superintendents. Their difference did not reach the level of statistical significance, however.

From the literatures on educational leadership and industrial leadership, and from their administrative experience, Brown and Hunter (1986) describe a model that a superintendent "should follow in order to produce the best effective academic environment for the education of elementary and secondary pupils" (page 1). They state that the primary task of the superintendent is to determine the best way to use the district's resources for the supervision of classroom teaching. Recruiting top-quality staff (teachers and administrators), providing continuous opportunities for staff development, and

supervising staff to achieve basic goals are key to instructional leadership for the superintendent. Quality personnel can be retained by properly socializing them into the organizational culture desired by the system. For instance, if personnel are new to the district, they should be given assistance in finding housing, adjusting to the new community, etc. (Brown and Hunter, 1986).

Calling and attending meetings on teaching and instruction that focus on district-wide instructional issues is another area of impact. Attending such meetings personally sends an important message to principals, teachers, the school board, and the community about priorities. Formulating district goals, involving professional staff in program planning, giving attention to financial planning so that resources are available to support programs – all are required of the superintendent. However, the superintendent as effective leader organizes for effective teaching and learning and, in doing so, should use principals as primary instruments for supervision leading to effective teaching and learning. High-quality interactions between superintendent and principals are recommended to support improvement in teaching and learning; that can be accomplished through monthly seminars delivered by the superintendent. Superintendents should also provide seminars for teachers, while also providing for other, continuous staff development (Brown and Hunter, 1986). In essence, organizing to manage the system's educational managers, and thus controlling the management team, is a clear necessity for the superintendent if organizational goals are to be achieved.

The superintendent, according to Wallace (1986), must assume the role of educational leader "given the current need to improve the quality of education in American schools . . . and must provide vigorous leadership" (Wallace, 1986, pages 17 and 22). Wallace acknowledges the four B's of school district management: buses, budgets, buildings, and bonds. He concurs with Cuban that research-based knowledge about the superintendent lags behind experience-based knowledge of the superintendent. Wallace offers his experiences as a superintendent in leading educational reform for the Pittsburgh School District. In a document on the instructional leadership of superintendents, Wallace (1986) maintains "that the superintendent must exert vigorous leadership to improve instructional effectiveness and promote standards of excellence in the schools . . . it is critically important that the superintendent exemplify instructional leadership in his own behavior for principals, teachers, and other professionals to emulate" (page 19). The following key components are identified (Wallace, 1985) and cited (1986, pages 19-22):

1. Educational leadership must be data driven. The superintendent who promotes educational reform must constantly seek and process a variety of educational data and inquire as to its meaning. Planning must be data based; it must constantly take stock of the status quo; it must be shaped by the latest research findings relevant to a particular problem. The implementation of programs, too, must be data based. The superintendent must constantly monitor program improvement efforts and gather data from teachers, administrators, students, and parents in order to assess the quality of the implementation and to make appropriate modifications to insure success.

   Finally, it is necessary to conduct evaluations to determine the overall effectiveness of plans that have been implemented. These data once again feed into the goal setting, planning, and implementation processes that are cyclical and continuous.

2. Participatory planning is critical. Those persons most affected by any new program initiative must be involved in its planning (by the superintendent). It is imperative that those who are to use an innovation or a new program alternative must acquire some sense of ownership by participating in the planning process.

3. Respect must be communicated to the teachers and principals who develop programs. More often than not teachers and administrators have much more talent to generate solutions to problems than they recognize. Giving them opportunities (by the superintendent) to become involved in the planning and development process, providing positive feedback, and giving them opportunities to experience the sense of gratification are important in moving any reform movement forward.

4. Risk taking is essential. No worthwhile change will come about without taking risks. To provide effective leadership, the superintendent must pursue challenges which cause everyone to reach beyond his/her immediate performance

level if educational reform is to be realized.

5. Knowledge of the change process is important. Many change models are available to educators. It is important that the superintendent understand the dimensions of the change process and attend to them during program implementation.

6. Leadership requires a vision of good education. It is important that sound pedagogical practices at the elementary, middle and secondary school level be clearly understood by the superintendent. He or she must know exactly what is expected in terms of teacher behavior, pupil behaviors, uses of instructional materials, and the like. Without such vision, educational leadership will fail.

7. Follow through is essential. The superintendent's failure to follow through and evaluate new program initiatives guarantees that they will not succeed. Follow through is really a function of comprehensive planning, careful implementation, and thorough evaluation.

8. Recognition of the key role that principals play in school improvement is vital. The old adage that good principals make good schools is quite correct. However being a good principal, from the author's perspective, requires that one be a strong instructional leader. Therefore, the superintendent as educational leader must take seriously the responsibility to develop that educational or instructional leadership capability in the principals. While instructional leadership itself may be somewhat of an elusive quality, the knowledge base with respect to instructional leadership is not. The knowledge of curriculum, models of instruction and instructional evaluation can be taught, learned and operationalized.

9. Routine administrative matters must be delegated. Responsible administrators must free the superintendent to provide educational leadership. The superintendent must allocate time to meet with groups that are planning, developing, implementing and evaluating instructional initiatives. By visiting schools and by demonstrating and communicating

interest in instructional effectiveness, the superintendent will increase the likelihood that educational priorities will be achieved.

10. The superintendent must model the educational leadership behavior that will be expected of principals and other administrators. If principals observe the superintendent engaged in data analysis, planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating instructional initiatives, they can adapt those behaviors to their own responsibility. If the superintendent models those behaviors listed above, the stage is set for other administrators to imitate that role within their own area of leadership.

Superintendents must provide vigorous leadership (Wallace in Brandt, 1987) and the key components enumerated above would constitute Wallace's definition of vigorous leadership (1986). The components identify key behaviors that he and other leaderly superintendents can use in reforming their schools.

From looking at reports of superintendents' values, styles, mobility, influence, and what effective superintendents declare is important to effectiveness, we move in the next sections to reports of what they actually do.

What They Do

Change in school systems is initiated at the systems' top level and the leadership of the superintendent of schools is a major factor in the process. Manly (1972) found that superintendent leadership occurred in three areas: in securing financial resources, in organizing staff development to support the change, and in obtaining and increasing community support. However, the reader is still left to wonder precisely what it was that the superintendents did in these leadership roles. Not surprisingly, Pitner and Ogawa (1981) report that, even in spite of a "sizeable literature surrounding the superintendency, much remains to be uncovered" (page 45), especially about what superintendents actually do to lead.

In a study to determine whether superintendents influence the academic performance of their school districts, a sample of California districts was used to estimate superintendents' influence on math and reading performance of

sixth and twelfth grade students, as assessed by the California Assessment Program (Hart and Ogawa, 1985). Scores for a six-year period, 1975-76 through 1980-81, were analyzed for the sample of districts that had experienced a change of superintendent during the period covered by the study. Controlling for environmental and district factors, a procedure similar to an analysis of variance was used to apportion variance in student performance to the variables of year, school district, and superintendent. The results found that superintendents do exert influence on the academic performance of school districts, and that they had a greater influence on sixth grade test scores than on twelfth grade scores. Superintendents accounted for 9.4 percent and 2.4 percent of variation in sixth grade and twelfth grade math scores respectively and 7.7 percent and 3.1 percent variation in sixth and twelfth grade reading scores. These results are characterized as evidence of "incidental" superintendent influence; they suggest that further research is needed to determine the nature of the influence. It is disappointing not to have information about the nature of the superintendents' influence on student performance, and on what they did, but it is quite interesting to know that the influence exists.

Pitner and Ogawa (1981) provided more understanding from their related studies. They reported that "superintending is communicating" and that superintendents are constrained by social and organizational structures. At the same time, "they control a major part of their day-to-day work and exert an important organizational influence" (pages 49-50). They did this by maneuvering within the restraints; they had some control over their own work and also took the lead in initiating contacts, creating opportunities, and articulating long-term plans. "Superintendents introduced most of the ideas discussed" in their meetings (page 56). They also exercised considerable control over the information flow of their organizations, and they "choreographed the activities of participants in the operation and governance of their school systems" (page 56). Given the influence of community preferences on the superintendent, it would appear that rather than controlling much of their work, they often serve as mere translators of community preferences into the school district's structures. However, it does not have to be that way.

Superintendents were also seen as persons of ideas, steering their districts in directions they chose. They exerted this leadership by employing the "strategies of persuasion, timing, and diversion" (page 58). The superintendent's major tool was transmitting information in a persuasive manner. A second strategy, timing, can be described as opportunism; superintendents determined

when the conditions were appropriate for moving the school or system in a direction that they, themselves, preferred. Diversion was a third tactic employed by superintendents: they "created issues to draw attention away from one on which they wished to act decisively" (page 61) but which could suffer from lengthy debate (the "sanctuary" idea mentioned earlier).

Despite these strategies, Pitner and Ogawa (1981) assessed that rather than singlemindedly directing their organizations, superintendents were responsive to organizational and environmental influences. They monitored information and they detected preferences to which the schools should conform — exerting some influence but constrained by community values, typically employing "unobtrusive influence strategies." These were labeled by Pitner and Ogawa as docile dimensions of leaders.

Docile leadership is not how Peterson, Murphy, and Hallinger (1987) would describe the superintendents in their study of effective school districts. These superintendents directed the activities of the technical core in their districts, and in these 12 districts they used various strategies to coordinate curriculum and instruction and to control principals' and teachers' work. One of the ways of doing this was to indicate a preferred method of teaching in nine of the 12 districts. These district leaders did not believe that "instructional technologies are totally idiosyncratic, evanescent, and unspecifiable" (Peterson, et al., 1987, page 18). These superintendents directed the central office in specifying learning models and particular teaching methods that they believed would improve student outcomes. To ensure that these instructional specifications were used by the teaching staff, they

> communicated expectations that the prescribed models were to be used,
>
> established structures — goals and evaluation, and
>
> established supports — staff development and budget allocations.

To be sure that the staff implemented the teaching model, training in the model was provided continuously, and principals were supervised "on their ability to use the model" (page 19); in addition, principals were evaluated on the basis of the model's school-wide implementation. Resources from the district level were identified to make certain there was appropriate support for the

model. This set of direct and indirect controls created a condition of control and coordination of instruction at the school level, and it also signalled clearly and powerfully to principals and teachers that the curriculum and the teaching model were important (Peterson, et al.. 1987).

Peterson and colleagues (1987) conclude that the chief executive can enhance goal achievement in three ways: coordinating, controlling, and assessing work in the technical core. The superintendents in the study increased their power through:

a) coordination of classroom activities by structuring, standardizing, and monitoring curriculum and instructional methods,

b) mechanisms of control employed by the central office and principals to constrain and direct teachers, and

c) specificity and frequency of assessment used to evaluate principals, teachers, and students in an effort to increase student academic achievement. (page 22)

These researchers contend that such "tighter linkages" may act as technical structuring elements and as cultural signals and symbols to teachers and principals. Assessing student achievement, for example, acts as a kind of output control and "as a potent signal to teachers and principals that student cognitive growth is important to superiors, a message not always received" (page 23). Likewise, coordinating district, school, and teacher objectives serves a technical and a cultural function. Making these objectives congruent can serve to improve "the coordination of actions, plans, and resource allocations, as well as increase the sense of shared mission and commitment to the district" (Peterson, et al., page 23). Surely this message concerning coordination and control is different from that reported by Hannaway and Sproull in 1978-79. These latter two researchers found that the "technical tasks associated with student learning are not supervised, managed, or coordinated in any serious sense across levels in school districts . . . the activities of management seem only marginally related to the production of activities of schools." Have "times" changed perhaps? Ortiz and Wissler have further responses.

In three studies of three superintendents guiding their districts in reform, the focus of analysis and the effect of leadership styles was on

organizational cultures (Ortiz, 1986). The analysis used Schein's nine descriptors of leadership in the creation of organizational culture (Ortiz, 1986, pages 4-5):

a. the leaders realize their function is to manipulate their organizational culture;

b. the leaders possess a vision and an *ability* to *articulate* and *enforce* it, through the inducement of a "cognitive redefinition";

c. the leaders are persistent and patient;

d. the leaders, although without precise answers and solutions, provide temporary stability and emotional reassurances while the organization is undergoing its changes through the creation of involvement and participation;

e. the leaders possess insight into the ways in which culture can aid or hinder the fulfillment of the organization's mission and the intervention skills to make desired changes happen;

f. the "insider" type of leader is able to surmount his/her own culture and change those aspects that need to be changed (Schein claims this is the ultimate in leadership), (322);

g. the leaders perceive the organizational problem coupled with the insight into culture and its dysfunctional elements;

h. the leaders are willing to intervene in the cultural process with the ability to be concerned for the organization above and beyond self, communicating *dedication* or *commitment* to the *group* above and beyond self interest; and finally,

i. the leaders possess emotional strength (Schein, 317-326).

The superintendent's role was critical in the process of decentralization of the schools in one district and required a leadership style designated as "symbolic" (Wissler, 1985). This superintendent rose from the teaching staff of

the elementary school, and this provided him with "symbolic power" that he used with the teachers (Ortiz, 1986). He changed the school district's "growth is better" cultural orientation to "learning and instruction is our business" (the district was experiencing rapid decline in population and resources). He transformed the cultural orientation by manipulating several things: he developed a strong relationship with teachers, participating with them in activities to gain and retain their support; teachers were acknowledged for their efforts. Second, he closed one high school and several feeder schools while significantly downsizing the central office. In the face of closing schools, he recognized parental support for education, and used various activities to build and maintain parental and community commitment and loyalty. Third, educational services were provided to classrooms in " a renewed and uniform way." This leadership style resulted in overall organizational improvement and in optimism and excellence in instruction and teaching culture.

A second superintendent, described as "intentional," moved his organization from a highly centralized and bureaucratic organization to one with a small central office and "clusters" of representatives from all levels of the organization. Social relationships "within and without" the organization flourished. He provided stability and emotional reassurance during the period of change. He believed that the quality of organizational participation was equal in importance to the outcomes. He empowered organizational members through the cluster system. He instructed personnel in decision-making processes.

The third superintendent manipulated the organizational culture through a redefinition of his office, adapting and integrating school personnel. This "charismatic" leader marketed the educational services of the district to its "buyers" and "sellers." Each leader improved his organization through changing the culture: changes in activities, relational patterns, attitudes, and the redefinition of organizational functions.

Barriers to effective leadership were the focus of an Arkansas study (Sales and Taylor, 1984). Superintendents were asked to identify factors that prevented them from being more effective leaders and administrators. Inadequate financing was cited as a major problem in 26.7 percent of the responses; however, 11.1 percent of the superintendents reported no inhibiting factor. These two major indicators were followed by others: "insignificant demands upon the superintendent, lack of time, limits on personal or professional capabilities, difficulties with school board, and attitude of the community or staff " (page 62).

Comparing two small, rural, neighboring school districts with remarkably similar communities provided the opportunity to determine whether differences in educational quality existed (Jacobson, 1986). Differences did exist in academic offerings and educational service delivery of the two systems. Applegat offered the "typical" limited educational program associated with rural schools, and Bakersville exhibited academic vitality, suggesting that problems faced by rural schools are surmountable. The role played by the Bakersville superintendent appeared significant to the district's success.

The superintendent's objective was very clear when he came to the Bakersville district 10 years earlier: to improve student performance. He saw the faculty as the "primary agents of change." Teachers' performance was monitored and if teachers did not perform up to instructional expectations, they were denied tenure, pressured into retirement, or dismissed. Teachers, however, were also made aware that their student achievement efforts would be supported; that is, the administration would strictly enforce a code of student discipline to reinforce the importance of learning and achievement.

"Teachers were encouraged to experiment with the curriculum and to collaboratively address problems" (Jacobson, 1986, page 106). Student achievement gains and fewer disciplinary problems resulted in improved working conditions for teachers. These contributed to intrinsic rewards to teachers and heightened their committment. Teachers' "talk" hinted at their ongoing commitment to improvement, as they upgraded course offerings, materials, facilities, and their own training.

The Bakersville superintendent was very aggressive in attaining his goals of improved student achievement, "even at the risk of creating community opposition." Applegate's superintendent "has been very sensitive to his community's go-slow attitude . . . his fiscal efficiency is always the first attribute mentioned" (pages 106-107). While Bakersville's superintendent is lauded for his financial management skills, his impact on the quality of the district's educational program is what teachers, board members and residents mention first. Bakersville's superintendent's commitment to student achievement has become internalized by the community. "Just as his faculty has come to believe that their efforts make a difference, the community has come to believe in continued improvement in student performance as the district norm . . . superintendent certainty plays no less a function in the rural school" (Jacobson,

1986, pages 107-108).

In a school improvement effort in New Brunswick, New Jersey, reported by the superintendent himself, the superintendent exercised the role of educational leader and brought about program implementation for change (Larkin, 1984). This superintendent used the "leadership and power of the position (to provide) the flexibility, influence, and direction needed to introduce and sustain the (new) program" (page 13). He did this by

1) developing and nurturing a zone of tolerance by tying the superintendent's position to goal achievement and by personally participating in the training process (as trainee and trainer);

2) facilitating planning and delivery by setting major objectives for everyone (beginning with the superintendent);

3) tying the inservice resources and direction to Achievement Directed Leadership (the new program);

4) sharing benefits by publishing achievement outcomes and tying them to program use and giving credit to the principals and teachers within the schools;

5) institutionalizing the program through regular conferences and seminars with principals. (page 13)

The superintendent's activities were grounded in multiple interactions, such as meetings and negotiations to involve the principals and teachers in the program. A meeting with the teachers' association and principals' association leaders was held monthly "to discuss, modify and review the program before implementation" (page 13). Each new stage of the program was reviewed and then presented to the general educational community. Throughout the district, meetings were convened with teachers, and meetings were held with teachers in the superintendent's office as well. Improved test results correlated to program implementation were published; at this point "much of the concern and need for reassurance disappeared . . . with success comes acceptance" (Larkin, 1984, page 14).

"The leadership of the superintendency," Coleman and LaRocque (1988)

unequivocally assert, "has emerged as the single most important factor in the creation of a positive district ethos" (page 3). They believe that both cultural elements and technical elements are important ingredients of educational leadership, and their premise that school district leadership is "largely creating and sustaining a positive district ethos" has its roots in the earlier school effectiveness work of Rutter and colleagues (1979).

In a detailed explication of district ethos, Coleman and La Rocque have identified six "activity and attitude focusses to which school administrators are encouraged to pay attention" (page 8). The first is a focus on learning, followed by accountability, change, caring, commitment, and community. For each focus, the administrator, in developing a district ethos, should consider three dimensions: being accountable, improving/adapting, and setting expectations (page 40).

Further, the researchers indicate how classroom, school, and district activities are parallel and suggest that classrooms are "embedded in schools, and schools in districts" (pages 8 and page 39). It seems probable, therefore, that district-level leaders can act in a way paralleling the activities of principals in climate building and goal directing, and thus affect district outcomes. Further, among the focuses, the first three are oriented toward *task*, while the last three are *affective* in nature, very similar to the task/relationship structure of much leadership study (page 8).

Coleman and LaRocque's study (1988) examined the activities of superintendents in high-performing districts, contrasted with superintendents in other districts. From interviews with the chief administrators, findings were synthesized. The superintendents' activities were defined in terms of "reach," which includes "vision" and "range." Vision is defined as the "professional norms which shape and guide activities" (page 21) and there are two of these:

1) a norm of consensual operation or consultation, with themes of establishing committees as consultative arrangements, accessing teaching staffs through principals, using principals as "sounding boards," changing consultation practices;

2) a norm of accountability with themes of collegial responsibility, application to all in the system, tied to articulated objectives, a moral imperative for those spending the public's money.

The superintendent's range is equal to those activities to which vision attention is given. The activities are "the expression in action of the norms of the superintendency" (page 24). Consensuality activities include those of district and school level collaboration, collegiality (such as supporting and facilitating teachers' involvement in peer observation), and care/nurturance (an example is an assisting support teacher who keeps teachers feeling comfortable about having computers). Accountability activities include three types:

1) accountability (principal and teacher evaluation, school assessment, program evaluation, reporting to the community and responding to public concerns);

2) standards (analysis of test data with longitudinal trends, inter-school comparisons); and

3) improvement (attention to areas reflecting low scores, establishing an objective for an area needing attention, providing inservice to "shore up" a weak area).

The conclusions of this study make connections between vision and range to portray superintendents' reach, the ability of the chief executive to influence subordinates. Accountability is a dominant norm, more frequently referred to in the more successful districts. The consensuality norm in the high-performing districts appears to be a means of influencing individuals to embrace the accountability norms. In the study districts where norms were frequently expressed, the activities reflect "the power of the norms in shaping the use of time by the superintendency"; the data indicate that some superintendents "are a pressure in the schools and community" (page 29), modeling energy and effort for the other staff and demonstrating accountability for the community.

In districts where statements about norms are much less frequent, there is a lower level of activity and there appears to be a particular pattern to the activities: "they intend to do things, but for a variety of reasons do not actually accomplish them" (page 31). In districts where there are no superintendent attempts to influence, the districts are largely "fiefdoms," where principals are not consensual or accountable. And in one district the superintendent's definition of his role made school improvement activity impossible — a definition of no responsibility for changing things, and of powerlessness.

In contrast with one superintendent who was nearly lifeless with very low activity levels and other superintendents who were passive, who assumed that decisions and work to be done were in the hands of others, the high-performing district superintendents had an "astonishing level of energy and activity, based on a high degree of conviction and commitment to district improvement. They were initiators, eagerly seeking new ideas, and persistent in their attempts to make changes. They seem full of confidence about their ability to make a difference to students, teachers, and schools . . .[this] suggests that the superintendency can have a marked effect on the work of other professionals in the district, through the creation and maintenance of a positive district ethos" (Coleman and La Rocque, 1988, pages 32-33).

In the next section, closer scrutiny is given to the relationship of superintendent and principal.

Relationships to Principals

One report in the AASA (American Association of School Administrators) Critical Issues Series is *The Role of the Principal in Effective Schools: Problems and Solutions* (McCurdy, 1983). This publication analyzes and reports successful practices and "advice from authorities" (page 2), while many of the concerns and ideas that are included resulted from two nationwide surveys of superintendents and principals.

An overwhelming consensus by practitioners, researchers, and other observers is that instructional leadership is the first responsibility of principals (McCurdy, 1983). To help principals exercise leadership, superintendents and boards must exercise their own leadership to "create the conditions which translate into good school districts . . . commitment and resolve are essential elements of such leadership . . perhaps most important, school leaders must give principals the financial, moral, and political support they require to carry out their responsibilities" (page 6). As one superintendent said, "The care and feeding of principals is the single most important thing a superintendent can do" (page 56).

How do principals view the role of superintendents in helping them perform better? One clear answer is: "Foster better communications between superintendents and principals" (page 56):

> We need superintendents who have enough guts to tell us what it is they want us to do so we can do it.
>
> Spending more time in one-on-one communications for reinforcement and critique of performance would be helpful.
>
> Actively work as a sounding board for the ideas of principals along the lines of a devil's advocate.

A second view that principals express is that superintendents could provide them more support:

> Be supportive of our efforts and work with principals on setting goals to improve.
>
> Be supportive and give verbal recognition but not interfere in the principals' realm of decision making.
>
> More support from superintendents would inspire confidence in principals. (page 57)

A third need from superintendents articulated by principals is a need to give principals more authority:

> The biggest help would be to allow principals decision-making authority/prerogatives.
>
> Allow freedom and give support to risks that principals may take in trying out new approaches in their schools.
>
> Make principals completely responsible for building management with no interference and then evaluate them on results. (page 57)

Two other suggestions from principals that would promote closer relationships focus on joint principal/superintendent goal establishment, and more principal involvement in district decision-making.

From the superintendents' point of view, they responded similarly to

principals; however, though they ranked good communications with principals as important, they cited inservice training as more important, and saw it as the foremost way to increase principals' effectiveness. They also cited "evaluation, management teams, more support for principals, and holding them accountable for school performance" (page 5). Some superintendents' suggestions include the following:

> Evaluations which include goal identification, problem identification, steps for remediation, and follow-up processes.
>
> The establishment of written job descriptions with the input of principal, evaluations based upon job descriptions, and setting goals for improvement based on evaluations.
>
> Make principals a real part of the management team.
>
> Greater involvement of principals in decision making — make them buy in and take ownership in programs and events.
>
> Establish a plan of action with your principals; use their input and give them the moral as well as financial support to carry out the program.
>
> Be honest with principals about which skills need to be improved and work with the principals to devise a method or methods to bring about the desired improvement. (page 58)

To find ways that superintendents evaluate principals and to identify patterns of superintendents' organizational structures for supervision, Champagne and Cobbett (1983) interviewed six superintendents in suburban-rural school districts in Appalachia. These superintendents defined supervision as the "procedures and interactions which monitor and shape professionals' behavior toward some generally set programmatic goals and procedures in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and methodology for learning" (page 81). The superintendents generally set the goals and believe they "have an adequate vision of the bad and the good" (page 81), and that their staffs could achieve goals that were growth oriented; however, one superintendent believed supervision was to correct inadequacies. "There was considerable noise in all the definitions," the researchers reported, "they talked in such inexact terms that the real

meanings were often obscured or confused . . . questioning seemed only to add to the confusion as the definitions kept changing" (page 81).

In terms of structures that superintendents created for supervision of their programs, one district had subject area supervisors who articulated and monitored the curriculum; in one district, the high school principal played this role for all subjects and programs. In three districts, there was an elementary and a secondary person in charge of curriculum; in the sixth district, the superintendent played the part since there was no formal designee in charge of curriculum and instruction.

In actual practice, the typical pattern was annual negotiation of yearly goals by all administrators with the superintendent or assistant to the superintendent. These goals evolved in "some way from an inexplicit and uncoordinated mix of district superintendent's goals, written job descriptions and individual self-selected goals . . . list of district goals was usually long with between 15-25 job responsibility areas . . . allowed almost any area of interest the individual administrator had to be included in the yearly goals" (Champagne & Cobbett, 1983, page 85). The administrators collected and analyzed their own data for their annual review meeting with the superintendent, at which time the superintendent provided verbal feedback followed by a short written addendum to the "administrator's own evaluation of effectiveness in meeting goals." The review meeting was one of two formal meetings per year: one to set goals and one to review accomplishments.

The supervision of teachers was based on a different set of assumptions but was also mainly evaluative monitoring. All teachers were evaluated against the "same pre-established standardized evaluation form" (variations of the state form) and none of the six districts' forms substantially differed from each other. "In all the districts more than 95 percent of the evaluative ratings were either identically satisfactory or so near as to be the same . . . none of these evaluation supervision systems is based on an explicit assumption or set of assumptions about an instructional model or on goal achievement established with individual or groups of teachers . . . or evaluation based on goal achievement of students" (Champagne & Cobbett, 1983, page 86). There was no system of evaluation or supervision that was data driven. Teachers were evaluated against the standards of their principals, the rating instrument unchanged regardless of the district's goals.

In considering the two groups – administrators and teachers – administrators are apparently thought to be more able in self-management and have no need to develop new skills. Teachers, however, appear to be thought of as less competent in self-management and to benefit from feedback that would improve instruction. However, the superintendents all suggested that their teachers would not appreciate – and would resent – "supervisory interference in the classroom" (page 91). Further, it did not appear that district goals were translated into classroom behaviors and no district had a system that allowed for measuring goal attainment. The "sanctity of the classroom" was not often breached. The superintendents all agreed that individuals – their people "want to do a good job and respond productively . . . if people naturally want to do a good job they will be internally motivated to achieve objectives" (Champagne & Cobbett, 1983, page 92). The researchers concluded that the superintendents believed their systems had established monitoring and evaluation of their goals, though no district had a reliable way to assess goal attainment throughout the system – administrative levels to classroom operations. Yet the districts felt they measured their success.

In their study reported in 1978-79, Hannaway and Sproull pointedly inquired, "if the function of educational administrators is not to control and coordinate the technical core, tasks of the organization, then . . . what is their function?" In contrast to the Champagne and Cobbett study (1983), and in concert with Hannaway and Sproull's question, Peterson's study (1984) explores superintendents' control of the technical core, and the specific techniques and strategies used to this purpose. In research examining the ways central administrators shape the work of elementary principals, Peterson (1984) reports that the central office provides a balance of autonomy and control over the principals, using a combination of tight controls and loose controls. Principals are given "considerable autonomy over the processes they use but held accountable for results" (page 573). In lengthy interviews, as Peterson reports, 113 principals and 59 superintendents were queried about practices in the districts and about the ways they (superintendents) control principals. Control strategies reported were *supervisory visits* to the schools, although most principals were infrequently supervised. While the researcher's assessment was that there was "light supervision," it did afford direct information to those superintendents who visited schools frequently. This lack of direct supervision found compensation in other forms of control. For example, constraints over the amount and flow of resources *(input control)* to schools were used extensively as a second means of control. School social status seemed to influence the use of input controls, with principals in high-status schools permitted more latitude with budget processes

and more possibility to transfer funds. "Thus, principals are given more autonomy when parents are more assertive and demanding" (Peterson, 1984, page 585).

A third control was that over *behavior*, in which rules, procedures, directives, and required administrative tasks and activities were used. Centralization of curriculum was strong, as another means of determining behavior regarding the content of instruction in the schools. *Output control* was a fourth means, and student testing was an example, with frequent use of standardized achievement tests as the measure.

A fifth means, *selection-socialization*, was an important way to control principals in the districts studied. Selective recruitment and/or active socialization to the norms and values of the district were significant strategies used. Last, *environmental control* was also used. Indicators of environmental control were collected from principals, asking them "to list the criteria they thought were important to superintendents when they evaluated principals . . . and to describe the sources of information they thought superintendents used during the evaluation of principals" (page 592). The principals believed that such factors as the community were used to monitor their behavior and parental visits had the possibility to serve as supervisory visits.

These six controls over principals were expressed by different applications in various districts, with "tighter control over the administrative domain and somewhat looser controls over the instructional domain . . . these patterns point to a subtle balancing of control and autonomy, with principals constrained through the evaluation of outputs and the mandatory accomplishment of administrative tasks but permitted considerable autonomy in the selection of means to achieve ends" (Peterson, 1984, page 594).

The six controls can affect the instructional leadership of principals in three ways: "*directive*, detailing what a principal is to do, to decide, or plan . . . *restrictive*, setting the limits on resources, time, decisions, or actions which may be taken . . . *formative*, shaping the norms, attitudes, values, and motivational structure of the principal" (Peterson, 1986, page 144). Superintendents can understand how controls can be directive, restrictive, or formative influences on their principals and can be used relative to the needs of the district. It should also be understood that these various controls will affect leadership of principals differentially. By applying these understandings, "superintendents can foster improved instructional leadership on the part of principals" (Peterson, 1986,

page 151).

In research on superintendents as instructional leaders in effective school districts, interviews with superintendents from 12 of the most instructionally effective districts in California were conducted by Murphy, Hallinger, and Peterson. These districts "consistently exceeded their expected range of student achievement" in reading, mathematics, and language arts over a three-year period, considering the students' socioeconomic background. The findings focus on district-level policies and practices that the superintendents used to coordinate and control the instructional management activities of their principals (Murphy, Hallinger, and Peterson, 1985; Murphy and Hallinger, 1986). The study results indicate that in school districts which are effective in instruction, the superintendents are more active "instructional managers" than prior studies have suggested.

The superintendents reported actively "managing and directing technical core activities in their districts" using an array of direct and indirect leadership tools (Murphy and Hallinger, 1986, page 220). Their involvement included the following:

1. **Setting goals and establishing expectations and standards**. The 12 effective districts were goal-driven and oriented toward accomplishment; "increased student learning was their primary goal . . . and superintendents both developed this achievement orientation and translated it into norms and goals which in turn guided the actions of others in the school system" (page 221). They were seen as "key actors" and were "directly, actively, and personally involved in goal development," at the district level but also took care that "school level objectives reflected district achievement norms and goals" (Murphy and Hallinger, 1986, page 221). To increase student learning was their primary goal. To do this they focused on curriculum and instruction, and goal statements reflected this. The goals were internally developed with the process guided by the superintendent aided by the superintendent's administrative team, and with little evidence of teacher or community input. These superintendents believed that their goals would influence district and school level activities, and they advocated a district-level mission to improve learning.

2. **Selecting staff**. Almost always superintendents in these districts

were involved in administrator selection and frequently in selecting new teachers. They developed the selection criteria and procedures, and looked for curriculum and instruction management skills and human relation skills in hiring new administrators. Assessment procedures for these skills were established, and superintendents prevented selections of new staff that were inconsistent with the district's viewpoint. The superintendents displayed personal involvement in personnel selection. This suggests both symbolic and control aspects: direct involvement in interviewing conveyed that new staff selection was a significant activity.

3. **Supervising and evaluating staff**. Ten of the 12 superintendents were primarily responsible for the supervision and evaluation of principals. They contributed significant time and energy to these tasks, visiting school campuses where they thought their visibility was a key to their leadership role, and averaging 8 percent of their total work year time to being in schools. Reasons for visiting schools and conducting meetings with each principal throughout the year were to supervise personnel, check systems, and build organizational climate. These supervisory visits provided information in evaluating principals' performance. Some actually checked progress of principals' objectives on their school visits, and four superintendents reviewed their principals' "engagement in clinical supervision activities" (Murphy and Hallinger, 1986, page 223).

   Superintendents also used school visits to monitor how school and district level systems were operating and to validate information collected previously from other sources. For half, assessing curriculum and instruction was a priority of the superintendents' visits. These visits permitted them also to monitor technical core operations. Supervising principals and evaluating them annually on their performance in meeting yearly objectives was another purpose of school visits. Principals were expected to develop goals and objectives for their schools that "spoke to" district purposes and instructional and curricular goals. District goals provided an "umbrella," and principals were expected to match school goals to those of the district. Goals were addressed at a pre-school or beginning-of-the-year conference when superintendents and principals met together. Throughout the year superintendents received updates on objectives; principals received "formal written evaluations that were

reviewed in end-of-the-year conferences" (page 224).

In these districts personnel evaluation was not the typical *proforma*, perfunctory activity for teachers and principals that it is in many districts. The relationship between district goals and evaluation of school personnel (principals) was a strong one. Superintendents played an active role in supervising and evaluating principals. Several chief executive officers reported having placed a principal in an "improvement mode"; they had terminated approximately 15 percent of their principals in the last five years "because of inadequate job performance" (Murphy and Hallinger, 1986, page 225). Superintendents established particular objectives for principals based on areas of low performance in prior years.

4. **Establishing an instructional and curricular focus**. Superintendents exhibiting instructional leadership established a district focus for technical core activities. They placed more emphasis on instructional and curriculum activities and monitored the activities. Further, it was not unusual for the superintendents to identify a particular method of teaching and expect all teachers to give it emphasis. System-wide curricular expectations also were developed as a means to articulate technical core operations.

5. **Ensuring consistency in technical core operations**. A high degree of internal consistency in curriculum and instruction pervaded the districts; superintendents viewed themselves as key to maintaining the particular focus. In other ways the superintendent brought consistency to the technical core. For example, since curriculum and instruction were important determinants of goals, curricular and instructional expertise was a significant factor in the process to select new administrators. Professional development was tied closely to curriculum and instruction goals, and superintendents were active in the selection of staff development programs. Internship programs were used in most of the districts to socialize prospective administrators to the district's perspective on curriculum and instruction.

   Another example of maintaining consistency in the district was through the allocations of resources. These chief executives reported a high correlation between budget allocations and district goals. A

surprising amount of time was given by superintendents to coordinate curriculum and instruction. Teacher evaluation was standardized across each district and evaluation objectives were closely related to school objectives.

6. **Monitoring curriculum and instruction.** Superintendents used their school visits to review:

   (1) the extent to which district and school goals were being implemented in classrooms;

   (2) the match between the district adopted curriculum and the objectives emphasized during class lessons;

   (3) the pervasiveness of the district-preferred teaching strategy;

   (4) the principal's clinical teaching and supervision skills;

   (5) the effectiveness of school and classroom management practices as reflected in student movement patterns on the school campus and student engagement rates in classrooms; and

   (6) the principal's level of understanding about what was happening in the areas of curriculum and instruction in their schools. (page 227)

Further, some superintendents of smaller districts collected work products from the schools and used small and large meetings to examine the implementation of technical core activities. Inspecting curriculum and instruction was done also through school visits by other central office personnel, who made as many visits to schools as the superintendents. Observations and information from central office staff were gathered by superintendents through informal contacts and through regular central office staff meetings.

Technical core outcomes were inspected. Student achievement results were used in the evaluation of teachers by nine of the superintendents, while eight used student scores in principals' evaluations. High expectations for student performance were *de facto* objectives in many of the districts.

To summarize, the superintendents in this study (Murphy and Hallinger, 1986) report more active involvement in three areas than is typical ". . . in establishing district direction in the areas of curriculum and instruction, in ensuring consistency and coordination among technical core operations, and monitoring internal processes and inspecting outcomes" (page 228). These superintendents were directly involved in the technical core operations of their districts. Finally, "there are," these researchers report, "substantial parallels between the findings on the principal as instructional leader and the role of the superintendent as instructional leader" as described in this study (page 229).

Murphy, Hallinger and Peterson (1985) report that superintendents in the study described above were personally responsible for supervising and evaluating principals and generally took direct charge of these activities. While they engaged in the *review* activities already mentioned, they also engaged in *culture-building* activities. These include (1) communication or being available to speak with staff; (2) team-building activities, or those wherein the superintendent showed concern, developed work groups and supported building level morale. (3) Problem resolution activities included securing rapid solutions to problems and cutting through red tape. (4) Knowledge building was done by "staying on top" of current information, and using site visits for collecting and testing information.

These superintendents, described by Murphy, Hallinger and Peterson (1985), act as "highly visible leaders on school campuses, are internally interested in curriculum and instructional matters, and spend a good deal of time supervising principals. They appear to be key agents in linking schools and district offices . . . and promoting tighter coordination between district and site administrative staff" (page 82).

In this study – where district effectiveness was defined as "school districts whose student achievement scores, aggregated to the district level, consistently exceeded the scores of other districts, after controlling for student socioeconomic status, over a three-year period" (Murphy, Hallinger, and Peterson, 1986, page 6) – none of the superintendents gave priority to selecting principals on management or general administrative skills (e.g., organizing or managing budget and facilities). These were not first choices of skills sought when hiring new principals. What they did look for were skills in managing the technical core – leading staff in curriculum development, and proving their background in teaching methods, instructional knowledge, curriculum (Murphy, et

al., 1986, pages 10-11), and good human mangement skills (relating to people and motivating and dealing with people). The superintendents believed that if principals had these skills, they could be taught whatever else they needed. Superintendents did place importance on candidates' ability to work "as a team player" in the district-wide organization. All the districts studied had well articulated processes for principal selection, and in ten of the twelve the superintendent, as already stated, was personally responsible for the supervision and evaluation of principals (Murphy, et al., 1986, page 12). In the climate building activities of the superintendents, team building was developed in such a way to communicate that everyone was "part of a common team, that the superintendent knew what was going on, and that the top of the organization cared about lower levels of the organization" (page 16).

In eleven of the districts, participation in staff development for administrators was not voluntary; it was mandated, and the major focus was on curriculum and instruction:

1) supervising and evaluating teachers, especially the application of clinical supervision techniques;

2) improving the instructional leadership skills of the principal;

3) promoting effective teaching strategies, especially the use of lesson design and the principles of interactive teaching;

4) improving the quality of the curriculum;

5) developing strategies to improve the use of time in classrooms;

6) improving instructional and curriculum programs for bilingual education; and

7) creating better classroom management systems. (pages 17-18)

Superintendents in these effective districts were willing to confront their principals in order to solve problems, and they held principals' job performance accountable through continued employment. The superintendents did not avoid conflict, but called meetings with principals when problems seemed to be developing. "Problems were defined; people were not attacked" (page 21).

Changes to address problems were identified and superintendents said "they required change strategies to be implemented and followed up with principals to be sure that they were" (page 21).

Essentially, the superintendents' message was that every child could learn, and principals would see to it that they did. In these districts superintendents were observed to be connecting schools with the districts and exercising more control over the school administrator. In this way they "seemed to exercise leadership patterns that brought focus and meaning to potential control functions, e.g., goals, supervision. They also exercised the specific behaviors that actualized many of the control mechanisms, e.g., site visits to schools, regular review of principals' objectives" (Murphy, et al., 1986, page 35). Clearly, superintendents are in the power position to provide this centrality of purpose.

In a study of the role of districts guiding and leading school improvement efforts, in particular to increase the achievement of all students, Pollack, Chrispeels, Watson, Brice, and McCormack (1988) found that in five of the six districts studied, the superintendent was seen by all other district and school level administrators as the key person "setting and guiding the improvement goals of the district . . . superintendents see themselves and are seen by others as modeling instructional leadership particularly through their regular visits to schools" (page 7). Superintendents also played a very active role in monitoring the efforts to change and improve and also in focusing on curriculum issues. Other district administrators played key roles and effort was given to three areas: direct support to principals, developing curriculum alignment with test items, and staff development.

All of the six districts studied exercised control over principals' behavior. Direct control functions included selection, supervision and evaluation, and socialization of principals (done through training and professional development). Indirect influence was exerted on principals and improvement efforts through "goal setting, resource allocation, curriculum and instructional development, and test data analysis" (page 18). The control from the district was not seen to be at the expense of concern and attention to people; principals were generally supportive of the directions they were given. They seemed to be controlled "in a nurturing and developmental way" (page 18). In the district the superintendent's role was seen as "a proactive goal-setting agent for change . . . provide the leadership that articulates the district's goals . . . provide models for change through their visibility and monitoring" (page 18). While the superintendent provided direction and support, it was the principal who was seen as

the key to school effectiveness. The instructional leadership and modeling of the superintendent at the district level and instructional leadership and modeling by the principals at the school level were seen as major factors in the equity districts and equity schools (districts and schools that reached equitable achievement scores across all economic sub-groups of the school's population; in the equity schools, students from low-income groups were outperforming their counterparts on state tests, and students in the top income bracket were also).

The selection, supervision and evaluation of principals were change strategies used in equity districts. In addition, staff development influenced the practices of schools and classrooms. For instance, training principals in strategies for instructional leadership influenced teachers and their use of class time. The districts used a developmental approach to change (page 19):

1) the district creates a commitment to change by setting precise expectations based on a common vision,

2) the district pays attention to the implementation of change through frequent discussion and monitoring, and

3) the district provides continuing support through staff development and on-site assistance.

Some district level functions appear more significant than others (page 19):

> setting clear goals and directions, allocating resources, selecting good principals and providing them with training and support, focusing on instruction and curriculum and providing staff development.

The cultural characteristic that permeates both the equity and improving districts is a belief that they can increase student achievement. The instructional leadership and modeling of the superintendent and principals were seen as keys in equity districts and in equity schools.

A specific example can be seen in a recent AASA Leadership for Learning Award that was presented to Maryland Superintendent John Murphy, recognizing his actions in establishing student performance objectives with principals and teachers, providing training for teachers and principals in effective schools research, and introducing a program of school-based management. These initiatives resulted in "impressive gains in student achievement and a striking rise in

public confidence" (Maryland innovator lauded for results, 1989, page 2).

In order to achieve instructional improvement, superintendents act decisively and directly to communicate expectations. Such an example appeared recently in a district's newsletter wherein the superintendent and school board's objectives for student achievement (in reading, math, language, writing, and thinking skills) were specifically identified. District personnel were assured that test results would be monitored closely and teachers provided "with the support they need to obtain improvement in learning outcomes. The bottom line, however, is that we must obtain improvements. Some teachers and administrators have told me that this focus on outcomes is too stressful. I am advising such people to leave and move to a less stressful place. The rest of us will handle the stress and hold ourselves to the only standard that really matters: learning outcomes" (Savage, 1989). There can be no doubt of goal orientation in this executive's district.

Felder advised superintendents that how a principal views his/her role as instructional leader will depend on "personal notions about the role and . . . what he thinks his 'boss' expects" (1982, page 2). Therefore, if the superintendent wants to shape the instructional leadership performance of principals, the superintendent will be very clear in communicating expectations of the role. The superintendent should decide about such expectations and the "essential thing is that you make that decision consciously."

Felder itemized what effective instructional leaders (principals) do and counseled superintendents accordingly to

1) insist that principals work with staff in specifying clear, observable instructional objectives that reflect the instructional goals of the district;

2) help principals understand that being an instructional leader is a top priority by seeing indicators of the role in their job descriptions and in their performance evaluation;

3) insist that principals train their staff in complementing the main purpose of the school, and in how their roles fit with everybody else in the endeavor – as reinforcement to the training, principals would model good communication skills and effective human relation skills, thus, the superintendent would model these behaviors himself

or herself;

4) encourage principals to create climates for teachers' growth and leadership, to trust teachers' professional expertise and judgement, and to share leadership with teachers, involving them in decisions about planning and implementation – the superintendent would model this behavior in working with the principals; and

5) provide adequate resources to principals, and admonish them to make it possible for teachers to plan and work together, to have the time and resources they need.

Finally, Felder identifies the crucial aspect of instructional leadership as supervision and advises superintendents to provide inservice for principals on the best supervisory process available that would enable principals to work well with teachers on instruction.

Leadership Sharing

One way to strengthen the relationship of superintendents and principals is by sharing leadership through team management. Anderson (1988, page 3) cites McNally's definition of the management team:

> A group formally constituted by the board of education and superintendent, comprising both central office personnel and middle echelon administrative-supervisory personnel, with expressly stated responsibilities and authority for participation in school system decision making.

As an idea in practice, team management/shared leadership has received mixed reviews by principals. Some reacted as if the notion were more myth than reality; others assessed that the concept was "all talk and no action" (McCurdy, 1983). Obviously, sincerity and care must be exercised if the management team concept is to work. The superintendent's willingness to share power will be very important, even though the superintendent "retains both final power and responsibility for the team's decisions" (McCurdy, 1983, page 61). The superintendent must determine "when to involve administrators in decision-making and when not to involve them" (Anderson, 1988, page 7). In addition, team

members' decision-making involvement can be different depending on the issue and situation at hand; the process may not be appropriate for all district decisions. The judicious superintendent makes it clear at the outset what level of participation is being solicited; otherwise "trust among team members can be damaged and the management team's effectiveness diminished" (Anderson, 1988, page 7).

Effective team management, then, depends on the superintendent's judgement and openness, but also on team members trusting each other. The superintendent trusts that team members are capable of making sound decisions for the district, and the team members trust that the superintendent will implement the team's decisions – all of which takes time. Time available for decision-making, as well as organizational size, "seem to be fundamental organizational and situational variables which must be considered by leaders when deciding whether to share decision making with subordinates or not" (Sorenson, 1985, page 7). McCurdy reports that the extra time required for team management's decision making is feasible based on the benefits and advantages that accrue. Some of the benefits are:

> Participation in decision making increases job satisfaction for most people.
>
> It gives them a sense of "ownership" in the organization.
>
> Decisions made by the group are likely to be better than decisions made by one person.
>
> Collaborative decision making increases the coordination of tasks and enhances the general quality of communications in an organization. (page 62)

For the superintendent who feels caught in the middle of management, team management may be a way out. As already stated, the superintendent must be willing to relinquish some absolute authority, and "rely heavily on the contributions of the team up to the moment of truth," when responsibility for final decisions is at hand (*The Administrative Leadership Team*, 1979, page 5). Clearly, the team's input must not be ignored too often or the team will become dysfunctional. The team, however, will require consistent leadership, based on a comprehensive operating plan; the plan should stand as "the gospel"

for the team. The plan will identify the team as one embracing all areas of need, or as one of many specialized standing and/or *ad hoc* teams. A well-functioning team can result in better quality decisions based on "diverse information from diverse points of view . . . to a healthy debate and ultimately the best decision" (*The Administrative Leadership Team*, 1979, page 6). A smoothly working team also can effect higher staff morale with participative management lessening "tension and aggression. . . fostering greater job satisfaction" (page 7). Additional results include greater support for implementation of decisions, loyalty to the superintendent and district, and more efficient management, since information is shared and decisions are made at the level nearest a problem. Essentially, the best information for decision making comes from key people, and their involvement enhances each individual's feeling of belonging. These lead to greater support and productivity, excellent reasons to bother with team management.

In Summary

On the one hand, superintendents are *advised* to lead with style, mystery, enthusiasm, and, in addition, vitality; but also to play simultaneously at being politician, manager, and teacher. Further counsel focuses on intellect and commitment as important, while brain dominance is another factor. Superintendents' values, such as values for instruction, equity, achieving ownership, local control, and open disclosure among all parties are cited as worthy of consideration.

From experience in leadership in industry and education comes the advice to focus primarily on using district resources to supervise classroom teaching. Certainly, that's where the heartbeat of the schooling enterprise resides, and superintendents are advised to give major attention to it. Impact in this arena can be realized through using principals as the instruments for supervision to achieve effective teaching and learning. Superintendents should model leadership in instruction for principals and teachers to emulate. Finally, one inclusive statement by effective superintendents captures it all by proclaiming the importance of a "broad array of leadership skills." These skills may include using data, applying participatory planning approaches, communicating respect, taking and allowing risks, attending to the change process, developing educational visions in terms of teacher behaviors/pupil behaviors/uses of

instructional materials, following through, and delegating routine administrative matters.

In terms of *what they do* to demonstrate leadership, superintendents maintained control through communicating and managing the information flow, but they acted responsively to organizational and environmental influences. Superintendents who were more pro-active communicated explicit expectations to personnel, established structures of goals and evaluation, and established supports with staff development and budget allocations to bring about change. Other superintendents improved their systems through their manipulation and change of the culture, including changes in relational patterns, attitudes, and organizational functions. Using teachers as the primary change agents and monitoring their performance while supporting their efforts were strategies used by superintendents for improvement. Another strategy was to regularly and consistently negotiate with principals and teachers before and during implementation of change. Finally, two researchers concluded that school district leadership centers on the creation and maintenance of a positive district ethos.

Superintendents play out their vision of schooling and dreams for children *through their principals.* Rhodes' (1987) metaphor, reported earlier in this paper, suggests the superintendent serves as convoy commander to the fleet of ships' captains (the principals). The superintendent leadership studies, reported in this section, allude to the district leader's influence on principals and how principals are the key to the implementation of the superintendent's vision and game plan for change. Leadership for change, instructional improvement, and school reform are thus demonstrated in the influential relationships of the superintendent with principals, a relationship that requires the delicate balance of nurturing and development, with pressure and control.

Six controls that superintendents can use result in three ways principals are influenced. One type of influence is directive, indicating what a principal is to do, plan, or decide. A second is restrictive, controlling limits on principals' time, resources, or actions. A third is formative, shaping the attitudes, values, and motivations of principals. Superintendents reporting about managing the technical core in their districts used these strategies: setting goals and establishing expectations and standards, selecting staff (administrators), supervising and evaluating staff, establishing an instructional and curriculum focus, ensuring consistency in operations, and monitoring curriculum and instruction.

Superintendents also engaged in culture-building, while mandating staff development for administrators. Modeling of instructional leadership by superintendents and principals were keys to effective schools and districts. Essentially, superintendents conveyed that every child could learn and principals were to see to it that they did.

Sharing leadership through team management is a strategy with both advantages and possible problems. These should be weighed and expectations made clear before implementing the process of shared leadership.

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CHANGE STRATEGIES

The leadership crisis of our times is without precedent, contends Greenleaf (1978, page 1). Bemoaning this leadership failure, Greenleaf extends the problem to the university's lack of preparing leaders. Part of the "fall-out" of this condition is the unlikelihood of the school being staffed by leaders that propel it to action, change, and improvement. "Reading research on schools in the last couple of decades leads to the interpretation that schools can develop as places for excellent teaching and learning," Wimpelberg (1987) asserts, "but, left to their own devices many of them will not . . . many classrooms, schools, and school districts function as little more than loose amalgams of roles and duties" (page 100). Too often, the typical superintendent pays little attention to providing leadership for instruction and learning. Wimpelberg, too, is concerned about the absence of leadership in schools and the crisis it portends.

Vision-Making and Culture Creation

Many contemporary institutions, including schools, do not have an adequate dream, or vision, that energizes people to grow, develop, and improve the organization. A new expectation for the school district's chief executive officer, the superintendent, is that this person is to become a purveyor of visions that lead to reform and improvement of the schools. If the vision is to substantially impact the system, it must contain the element of *change* (Sashkin, 1986) that leads to quality improvements. A second element of all visions is a *goal(s),* and leadership defines the goals for the staff. These goals translate the vision into meaningful actions to be pursued for organizational improvement. Finally, visions center on *people*, for only through them can the vision be realized in the everyday life of schools. People must be involved, share responsibilities, and take charge of the dream and make it their own. When people share common beliefs and values, they are developing an organizational culture. The visionary superintendent works to engender, define, and gain staff commitment to the shared beliefs or culture.

Tschirki (*The Changing Tide in Small Schools*, 1987) exhorts fellow superintendents to examine their own values, each day taking some time to ask themselves what is most important, what is the highest value that day. Focusing on the culture of the school, Tschirki suggests that improving the profession

doesn't cost a cent, but has to do with how superintendents and other leaders feel about the growth of people. "Outstanding leaders hire ordinary people and help them meet their full potential" (page 4). Blumberg poignantly reveals that what makes being a superintendent meaningful is "seeing people, particularly adults, learn and grow and knowing that you've influenced their development" (1985, page 216). This suggests continuous growth and development or change. Superintendent Tschirki told fellow conference participants that staffs need to talk about and understand change as "change is inevitable; pain is optional" (page 4). It is the leader's role to guide, direct, and support the staff in change. At the same conference for small district administrators, Hall asserted that leaders need to let their staff know that they can make a difference.

Superintendent Richard Wallace, in an interview reported in *Educational Leadership* (Brandt, 1987), agreed that a school culture of growth and development should lead to efficacious staff, "professionals . . . that can" (page 41). In Wallace's Pittsburgh schools, staff work in a highly professional environment and are given opportunities to develop their own particular talents "to the fullest." The superintendent's program supports individuals in this way, and the staff believe they can make a difference. Providing learning opportunities for teachers as well as students is seen in schools that matter (Clark, Lotto, and Astuto, 1984). Essentially, in order to realize their visions, superintendents cultivate individuals, for "excellence in schools . . . is excellence in people" (Clark, Lotto, and Astuto, 1984, page 50).

Joyce, Hersh, and McKibbin (1983) also speak of teacher efficacy as an attribute of effective schools. Such teachers in schools that are deemed effective feel strongly that they are in charge of their classrooms; they have a sense of potency that motivates them to maintain high levels of energy and task orientation. Efficacious teachers communicate to children that they *can* and *will* learn. Such being the case, a superintendent interested in school reformation should target teachers directly in change efforts. Supporting the development of efficacy in the teaching ranks could be a productive goal.

If efficacy seems to represent control, positive influence, and attention to task productivity, effective staffs couple this characteristic with pervasive caring, the human dimension. Caring is expressed by giving attention to children, by giving them affection and casual pats, and through the celebration of students' achievement. The task focus and the relationship focus can be acknowledged, applauded, and reinforced by the superintendent personally. What the superintendent rewards personally is likely to be repeated.

The chief school administrator is in the pivotal role in decisions to adopt changes that will operationalize visions of improvement. Early commitment to the adopted innovation is very important to administrators, more so than teachers, and the active involvement of the district level administrator sends the signal to building administrators that the effort should be seriously taken. District-wide change is not possible without the "support, encouragement, and involvement of the district administrator, and this support includes the provision of resources and training opportunities as well as communicating the expectation that the schools will be succesful in implementing the new practice or program" (Clark, Lotto, and Astuto, 1984, page 53).

However, Wisser and Ortiz (1988) maintain that successful organizational change is dependent, not on people, but on "the sophisticated control of information" (page 158), and that points of information are under the control of the superintendent: information about the schools' mission, instruction, and children; academic information including the latest theory and research that are interpreted for district application; and current, local, and social information. "The control of information serves as the technical core of the organizational leader" (page 159). These authors speculate that the reason schools are not understood better is that schools haven't been studied as *total* organizations, at the district level. These studies are being undertaken by Murphy, Hallinger, Coleman, LaRocque, Crispeels, and others reported in this paper. Most certainly, additional understandings are needed, to aid the chief executive in the complex tasks of district level change and reform.

Aponte and Quinones go further in suggesting environments or contexts necessary for supporting schools in their improvement efforts. Of course, schools cannot singlehandedly realize visions of preparing every child "to perform effectively all the roles imposed upon him or her by a competitive, changing society . . . Educational reform has to be a joint venture of the school, the family, government, and the whole variety of institutions that play a role in educating our youth," states Secretary of Education Arvilda Aponte Roque, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Department of Education (Moreno, 1986-87, page 46). Nathan Quinones, Chancellor of the New York City Public School System, echoes the sentiment regarding the educational obligations of institutions (particularly the home) to schools, "If I were to be asked what is a criterion that I would use as an indicator of a strong potential for dropping out (of school), it would be whether there is any reading matter in the home" (Moreno, 1986-87, page 25). The New York City Board of Education and the Department of Education for the

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are the two largest local education agencies in the United States. Their chief executive officers look to enlisting a broader context to support the education of children.

Prominent in its frequency in the literature of reform is the call for "empowerment" of school personnel. Patterson, Purkey, and Parker (1986) define empowerment as the "process of awarding power," and they assert that it can breathe life and renewal into the organization. These authors contend that anyone in the system can have access to power and that support information and resources are assumed to be available to all those individuals. Giving decision-making authority to those who will be affected by the decisions leads to more effectively operated school districts. This does not mean that the chief executive gives away the company store through wholesale delegation or abdication. Key decisions remain with the organizational head.

Nonetheless, decentralization is the thesis of new organizational structures, as in site-based management, for example, where power and accountability are given to administrators and teachers at the school level. As Caldwell and Spinks (1988) describe this self-managing school, "there has been significant and consistent delegation to the school level of authority to make decisions related to the allocation of resources (knowledge, technology, power, material, people, time and finance). This decentralization is administrative rather than political, with decisions at the school level being made within a framework of local, state or national policies and guidelines. The school remains accountable to a central authority for the manner in which resources are allocated" (page vii). Caldwell and Spinks do not address the role of the chief executive leader except to say that the collaborative school management effort should be reported to the superintendent.

Whatever the strategy or strategies employed by the chief school executive for effecting change and realizing new visions, a number of dilemmas will require resolution.

Dilemmas

To change the context or culture of education in a district clearly suggests an invitation to conflict. For school boards not interested in late-night meetings and escalating numbers of phone calls from school and community constituents, conflict is not appealing; peacefulness is. The leaderly superintendent, then,

must strike a balance between stability and change. The one calls for management of the organization, and the other for educational leadership. How much risk to take, the political choices to be made, the needs for security and certainty as opposed to the needs for change and improvement are all questions nested in this "focal dilemma," as described by Blumberg (1985). Embedded in this dilemma is the chief executive's responsibility to identify the needs of the system and raise the community's consciousness about matters of concern. This is a primary dilemma.

Cuban (1988) argues that teachers, principals, and superintendents engage in the same basic roles: instructional, managerial, and political. These are the bonds that hold them together in their common endeavor. The perception of "teacher as bureaucrat/technocrat and craftsman/artist, for example, roughly overlaps the principal as bureaucrat and instructional leader; both approximate the superintendent as administrative chief and instructional supervisor" (page 180). Thus, teachers and principals share dilemmas with the superintendent. Cuban identifies the following:

> Superintendents, teachers, and principals are subordinates and superiors at the same time. They supervise subordinates for goal accomplishment, albeit in the classroom, school, and district; they evaluate subordinates for goal attainment. Yet, they are themselves subject to the same supervision and evaluation. In change efforts this situation plays out in complex ways.
>
> Superintendents, teachers, and principals practice their professional roles in isolation; they are "solo practitioners." Teachers, principals and superintendents are "organizational loners." How then to provide the necessary interaction for change?
>
> Superintendents, teachers, and principals pursue professional autonomy and the possibilities of independent judgments and decision-making. Yet, each is constrained by the other, and the interrelationships that determine educational effectiveness. The impact on school improvement practices is obvious.
>
> Superintendents, teachers, and principals search for ways to resolve their status as public servant and professional, a persistent situation unlikely to be resolved.

Superintendents, teachers, and principals are governed by policies developed by lay citizens. The "experts" are told by non-experts how to conduct schooling; thus, they must accommodate policies that "challenge their expertise," and may run counter to their visions for improvement.

Superintendents, teachers, and principals are subject to incompatible demands. Teachers experience the contradicting expectations of school board, superintendents, principals and parents while motivating students to learn, and taking into account students' interests and needs. At the same time they are negotiating with students for their attention and maintaining a classroom free of disruption. For principals to do their job of managing the school while responding to the district office, students, superintendent, school board, and parents, they must also insure that teachers are heard and understood. The superintendent juggles the expectations of all while dealing with the ever present daily risk of conflict. "The stability is so fragile that bargaining with subordinates, juggling demands, and balancing incompatible interests occur continually to keep the external noise within acceptable limits" (page 183). In this context, how to introduce change and reform?

Superintendents, teachers, and principals experience a work day of disjointed activites, unfinished tasks, constant interaction with people; they rush through their days of unpredictable activity with children and adults. There is nearly no time for reflection; they know their "routines will be interrupted by the unexpected" (page 183).

How, then, to contemplate change?

Several more dilemmas that impinge on the superintendents' leadership for change have been identified by Gousha (1981). These outside factors "aggravate" the exercise of leadership. For instance, contributing to the frustration of the system leader is the skepticism of citizens' groups and competing interest lobbies, and "a pervasive media empire (that) complicates decision-making and slows it down" (page 5). The cost to the system of such accessibility and review by outside constituents can be significant in financial and psychological ways. The increase of independent political action groups is another factor affecting leadership. The general public has learned that power can be organized outside the typical channels of political parties, unions and interest groups. These issues groups can exert considerable political leverage to influence decisions.

When school board members represent not only their constituency but also an issue group, the superintendent's role is increasingly politicized, or perhaps impacted by the varying ideologies of the various groups.

An apparent loss of confidence in institutions and leadership is being expressed by the public. The loss of deference to public leaders has been exemplified by the press and public that demand an intimate knowledge of leaders and their activities. The more that is known of leaders' behavior, the less awe and trust are given to them by the public. Thus, leadership problems become public relations problems. Not surprisingly, superintendents spend more of their time on public relations and the media than on other aspects of their work.

Our democratic ideal insists that all children be served well and in a pluralistic setting. Pluralism in our society and in our schools is seen as valuable; however, no cross-cutting public issue or school curriculum has served as a force to unify the various pluralities. The school talks about serving multiple "publics" with each expressing its own views and demands; there is no cohesive public.

Another School Leader

One could conclude from the text in the prior section on dilemmas that there is no hope of providing district level leadership, change, and improved schooling. Nothing could be further from the truth, if attention is given to the earlier section on *Leadership Skills and the Superintendent*. The dilemmas are presented here to acknowledge that school districts are complex, non-perfect, not always rational entities that are influenced by a host of variables. Sorting those variables out, recognizing their potential for enhancing or denying leadership activities would seem to be in the repertoire of behaviors of effective leaders. Effective superintendents, like efficacious principals and teachers, believe they can make a difference. The certainty of this belief is not readily deterred by negative possibilities.

Parallels may be drawn between the effective school-based principal, who is expected to guide and nurture teachers in improving their instructional practices, and the district-level superintendent. Several researchers have reported their studies of superintendents in effective districts working directly with principals (as principals do, or are expected to do with teachers), mobilizing and supporting the principals in their school improvement efforts. These superintendents were seen as assessing principals' effectiveness, setting

goals with these mid-managers, and planning with them for their growth and continued professional development. Superintendents can realize their visions of excellence for their districts through one-to-one work with principals – the connecting link to teaching and learning. The "relationship between the superintendent and principals is particularly important. . . if there's a lack of confidence between the superintendent and the principal, reform in that building is almost doomed" (Paulu, 1988, page 8). Principals will be strengthened by strong and knowledgeable superintendents; through principals, superintendents can directly exercise instructional leadership. These assessments are neither arbitrary, capricious, nor out of the control of the executive leader.

In Summary

Change is dependent on vision and the superintendent has the responsibility for the district's vision. It is people, though, who turn the vision into reality, and for this to occur school personnel need support for growth and development and a culture that increases their sense of efficacy – these are keys to a growing and improving organization. Empowerment and decentralization of control are also powerful factors contributing to the development of organizational culture. It is suggested, further, that the involvement of the family and community is a necessary requirement for an all-embracing climate of school change. And, clearly, school board members must be involved as active participants, also.

In building a context or culture of change, many factors can be disruptive. There is the loosely coupled district organization of superintendent, principals, and teachers with varying and frequent conflicting needs. There are struggles over the allocation of limited resources. Public interest groups are vying for attention and demanding action. The media seek to publicly monitor leaders and their actions, which can contribute to a loss of confidence in schools and other institutions. All of these factors represent invitations to conflict, especially in the context of change.

Though the literature has reported abundantly about what principals can do to demonstrate leadership and facilitate change in their schools, the knowledge base from research on the work of superintendents as leaders, especially as contrasted with their managerial role, is quite sparse. It has been suggested that superintendents are too engrossed in satisfying school board members, in developing diplomacy and/or confronting conflict in the community

to be able to attend to curriculum and instruction. The "new" superintendent model, like the current principal model, will be more aggressive in pursuing changes to improve outcomes for students' instructional success. For some superintendents, this will surely involve risk-taking and behaving in ways that do not feel familiar.

This paper has traced *images* of executive leadership – sometimes faint, sometimes formidable – from definitions of leadership and vision, to dilemmas associated with the superintendents' role that makes leading and improving a school district difficult. In between these sections of the paper, views of the superintendent's various roles were reported. There were significant variations in perceptions of the role, differing among those within the office and perceived differently by those who do not occupy the role. The formulation of the role is in a state of flux, lacking generalized definition. Further, the role is most often shaped by the context; the superintendent does not control the environment. What should the role be to meet society's needs through educating its young people? There is a critical need for extensive studies of superintendents, perhaps parallel to those conducted on principals, to formulate a consensus role definition. Studies, for instance, are also needed to indicate if, and how, the size and the type of the district influence the superintendent's role in instruction; board/superintendent relations need to be examined as a factor that impacts the superintendent's instructional leadership role.

The third section of the paper provided descriptions of how superintendents demonstrate and express leadership. These descriptions are modest in number but strong in promise. These "effective" superintendents model their leadership behaviors for principals to emulate, provide direct guidance to the technical core of schools, and enhance achievement outcomes for children. *This paper argues that superintendents' active instructional leadership is becoming increasingly important to improving the conditions for students' instructional success.* Therefore, additional research on what effective superintendents do and how they do it is long overdue. As Wimpelberg succinctly stated, "the new study of superintendents and instructional leadership [is an] imperative" (Wimpelberg, 1988, page 307). With a definition of role and identification of successful behaviors, preparation and continuing professional growth programs must address the training and development of the "new" superintendent. This challenge is of the gravest urgency.

This is a descriptive paper that calls for the design of a new model of

superintending. Those who study the superintendent and superintendents who seek to improve their practice will likely find ideas that resonate well. As suggested, studies that are instructive about how to become more effective district leaders are thin indeed. Thus, researchers should find much for further exploration, for research and evaluation demands to be done. School boards and other policy-making bodies should find this review of interest as they shape their work with superintendents. Finally, for leaderly superintendents, providing instructional leadership to a school district is arduous, and guiding the district's process of change and improvement requires the leader's continuous attention. The imperative of such leadership is unquestioned.

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APPENDIX A

from

School Administrator Job Performance Statements
Texas LEAD Center, 1988
pages 19-22

APPENDIX A

I. School Climate

1. promotes an open, collegial environment among staff and develops positive staff morale.
2. uses collaborative decision-making with the staff, when appropriate, and within given time constraints.
3. demonstrates effective interpersonal skills in relating to the staff, school board, and community, and skill in anticipating, managing, and resolving conflict.
4. demonstrates sensitivity in dealing with staff, students, and community members from diverse cultural backgrounds; communicates similar expectations of the staff throughout the district.
5. appropriately assesses school district climate in conjunction with teachers, parents, and others; uses findings to maintain or improve conditions.

II. School Improvement

6. demonstrates high expectations for staff and student performance in an enabling, non-threatening way.
7. articulates a vision of what the district can and should achieve; and gains acceptance among staff, students, and the community.
8. uses a wide variety of evaluative data and needs assessment findings to formulate a mission, goals, and objectives cooperatively with the school board, staff, and community.
9. recommends to the board sound policies regarding organization, finance, instructional programs, personnel, school plant, communications, and related functions of the district, directed towards district improvement.

III. Instructional Management

10. provides for systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the instructional program and plans for improvement.
11. promotes collaborative district, campus, and classroom planning to:
    1) establish instructional objectives; and
    2) develop, implement, and refine curriculum on a regular and systematic basis.
12. ensures that instructional management performance meets or exceeds expectations.
13. ensures that student progress is evaluated on a regular, systematic basis, and the findings are used to make programs and services more effective.

IV. Personnel Management

14. manages the recruitment, assignment, evaluation, remuneration of personnel and ensures that all personnel programs achieve their intended purposes.
15. directs the improvement of staff performance through a planned, professional development process, directed toward individual renewal and attainment of the district's mission.
16. delegates duties, responsibilities, and functions (when appropriate).

V. Administration and Fiscal/Facilitites Management

17. coordinates the human, material, and fiscal resources needed to implement the district's programs and services.
18. takes action to ensure that resources are allocated to accomplish the district's mission and to maintain standards.
19. reports to the board on the status of support programs, personnel, and facilities operations of the schools.

20. takes action to ensure that all facilities are kept in good repair, adequate to meet future population needs, and in general, provides for a safe and conducive learning environment.
21. manages the budget development and reporting process; ensures that programs are cost effective, and funds are managed prudently.
22. takes action to ensure that the district complies with all laws, rules, and policies related to fiscal management, meeting accepted accounting standards.

VI. Student Management

23. ensures that pupil/personnel services are effective in promoting student conduct and social growth.

VII. Board/Superintendent Relations

24. demonstrates a clear understanding of the respective roles of the board and the superintendent.
25. jointly develops (with board) a systematic evaluation process for the superintendent.
26. demonstrates skill in communicating with the board (in writing and orally); responds expeditiously to the board's directives and requests.
27. interacts with members in an ethical, sensitive, and professional manner; demonstrates trust and respect for board members and encourages the same collegiality among them.
28. meets the board's expectations regarding board meetings:
    1) need for information prior to meetings;
    2) preparation for meetings; and
    3) organization of board meetings (e.g., logistics, conducive physical environment, agenda, arrangements with media representatives).

29. consistently articulates to the board the relationship between the district's mission and programs, budgets, personnel decisions, and other district operations.

VIII. Professional Growth and Development

30. formulates (with the board) a professional development plan to improve professional performance (incorporates input from staff, mentors, and/or others in determining the content of the plan).
31. seeks out and participates in professional development programs.
32. actively participates in professional activities, shares ideas and information with other professionals, and initiates action to confront problems facing the profession.
33. demonstrates behavior that is professional, ethical, and responsible, is a role model for all district staff.

IX. School/Community Relations

34. manages a district-wide school/community relations program.
35. clearly communicates district needs and programs to parents and to the community and responds to their concerns in a timely manner.
36. builds or maintains coalition among respective community groups in support of schools' goals and objectives.
37. gains community support for bond issues, tax issues, and other referenda that support the district's goals and objectives.
38. participates in civic affairs that are appropriate for educational leaders. (Texas LEAD Center, 1988, pages 19-22).